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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 67/NO. 40 NOVEMBER 17, 2003

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Rumsfeld, Bush vow to stay U.S. course in Iraq

Undeterred by attacks on GIs, White House says it has enough troops on ground

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Hours after a missile downed a U.S. helicopter near Fallujah, Iraq, on November 2, killing 16 GIs, U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld said on the Fox News Sunday television program, "Our goal has to be to continue doing what we're doing on the global war on terror, and that is going well. We are capturing and killing a lot of terrorists."

Arguing directly against liberal politicians and pundits who are criticizing Washington's course in Iraq, the defense secretary quipped, "Sitting around wringing your hands and saying, 'It's horrible, it's horrible, everything is terrible' is nonsense. It isn't all terrible. There's some darn good stuff happening." He listed the formation of the U.S.-handpicked Iraqi Governing Council, the introduction of a new currency, the opening of a Central Bank, and the reopening of schools and hospitals as accomplishments of the U.S.-run regime.

Referring to the U.S. casualties that morning, Rumsfeld stated later on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" television show: "In a long, hard war, we're going to have tragic days, as this is. But they

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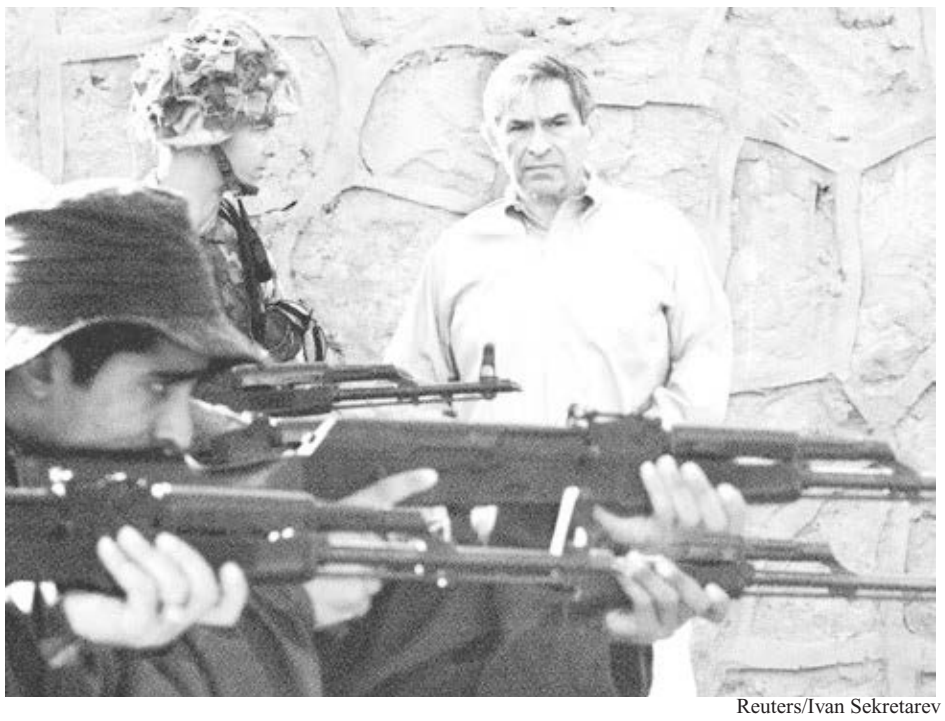

Reuters/Ivan Sekretarev

U.S. deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz (center) speaks to Lt. Col. Steven Russell, commander of the U.S. Army 4th Infantry Division 1-22 Infantry regiment, as they watch Iraqi Civil Defence Corps trainees at military base in Tikrit, northern Iraq, 120 miles north of Baghdad, October 25.

Washington: Tehran is destabilizing occupation of Iraq

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In a television interview November 2, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld was asked by a reporter: "How active is Iran in trying to destabilize our efforts?" in reference to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. "Oh—active," Rumsfeld responded.

"There are foreign terrorists in that country, like the Ansar al-Islam, who have come back in from Iran and are trying to kill people," Rumsfeld stated.

In an interview on ABC's "This Week" TV news program later that morning, Rumsfeld was asked what price Washing-

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Auto workers in Brazil walk out for higher wages to offset inflation

BY RÓGER CALERO

Nearly 25,000 auto workers in Brazil walked off the job October 29 to press their demands for higher wages. The strike shut down production at Volkswagen, and slowed assembly lines at Ford and DaimlerChrysler, the manufacturer of Mercedes Benz models. Scania plants were also affected.

The work stoppages came after the failure of talks between the car manufacturers and the ABC Metalworkers union, which organizes the workers in auto. ABC rejected the companies' initial offer of a 15.7 percent wage raise, stating that the increase barely makes up for inflation, which stood at 15.1 percent in September.

"Workers are fighting for a real increase in wages," said a letter signed by Valter Sanches for the Metalworkers union. As in

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Los Angeles transit workers strike is solid, as bosses declare 'impasse' in talks with union

BY JAMES VINCENT

LOS ANGELES—Two weeks after transit workers here went on strike, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) board of directors declared an "impasse" in its negotiations with the Amalgamated Transit Union. The company is now demanding that its contract offer be brought to the membership for a ratification vote.

Despite MTA intransigence and unfavorable media coverage, the strike remains solid. The central issue in the fight is the transit authority's attempt to significantly increase health-care costs for workers.

The company is offering what it claims is "a generous and fair last, best and final multi-year offer," according to an October 29 MTA news release. This contract pro-

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Locked-out Utah miners and allies take battle for union to Salt Lake City

Salt Lake Tribune/Francisco Kjolseth

Ricardo Chávez (right) and other miners fighting for a union at the Co-op Mine in Huntington, Utah, picket company offices in Salt Lake City October 30.

BY MARCO ANTONIO RIVERA

SALT LAKE CITY—"What do we want?" a miner called out. "Union!" responded a crowd of 40 people, including a dozen coal miners locked out by C.W. Mining Co. in Huntington, Utah. The group was picketing October 30 in front of the offices of Carl Kingston, the lawyer who represents the interests of the infamous Kingston clan. C.W. Mining, also known as the Co-op mine, is reportedly one of the most profitable businesses of the polygamous family, which owns a $150 million empire in six western states.

The miners drove from Huntington to hook up with folks they had met during the kickoff of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride here last month. Jobs with Justice, a coalition of labor and community organizations, helped the miners organize the informational picket line in front of Kingston's legal office. The group also hosted a meeting later that day to launch a broader effort to extend solidarity for the miner's fight.

On September 22, miners walked out of this underground mine. They were protesting unsafe working conditions and the suspension of a co-worker for union activity. The company fired and locked out the workers, who have vowed to continue their struggle to get their jobs back and be organized into the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

"UM-WA, UM-WA" chanted miners and supporters as lawyer Carl Kingston refused an offer from the anchorman of ABC TV Channel 4 to debate UMWA International representative Jim Stevenson in front of the camera. "*Mineros unidos, jamás serán vencidos!*" (Miners united will never be defeated), chanted the miners, most of whom come from Mexico. Others joined in with chants of "*Luchamos para vencer, no nos ganarán!*" (We are fighting to win, they will not defeat us), and "*Aquí estamos, y aquí nos quedamos; y si nos sacan, nos regresamos!*" (We are here, and we are here to stay; and if they throw us out, we will return).

In addition to Channel 4, coverage of the action included articles published the next day in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *La Prensa,* and the previous day in the *Deseret News*. The current issue of the *UMWA Journal* has extensive coverage of the struggle in Huntington. The miners also did a one-hour live interview prior to the picket line on the Gena Edvalson show at KRCL radio.

Surface and underground miners, oil and rail workers, students from the University of Utah, and members of community groups such as Utahns Against Hunger and Mormons for Equality and Justice took part in the picket line.

"I am here to express support to the miners and their families and to find out what else we can do to help," said John Langford,

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Miners picket in Salt Lake

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a miner at the huge Kennecott Utah Cooper surface mine, just outside of Salt Lake. "I will pursue the possibility to discuss this in the locals in my mine."

"We have been collecting monies and food for the miners during our midday break at school this whole past week," said Gokcer Ozgur, a student at the University of Utah here and member of Student Labor Action Project. The group organized a trip to Huntington along with some activists from a local Mormon church to bring food and the donations they collected at school for the miners' fight.

James Tobler of the group Mormons for Equality and Justice decried what he said was lack of attention by the Kingstons to the teachings of Mormon leader Brigham Young, who he said stood up for workers and injustice. "We'll stand by the workers until justice is achieved," Tobler stated. "It surprises me that people can sleep at night."

Bertila León, a coal miner who is a single mother of five, was one of the miners interviewed on KRCL radio and by the *Salt Lake Tribune* during that day's activities. "Yes, of course I am worried about the medical bills, the rent and the food for my children," she said. "But it is important to stand up against years of injustice."

During the KRCL interview León was asked how a mother of five ended up working at Co-Op. "After I separated from my husband because of violence," she said, "it's not like I had much of a choice. There are not many places where I could earn enough income for my family where I live. So I went to the mine and I became a belt man."

When she was asked about safety, León responded: "We would sometimes force them to fix some unsafe situation if we pushed hard enough, but in general you would point out the problems and the boss would do nothing."

Ricardo Chávez and some of the other Co-op miners at the picket line showed the *Salt Lake Tribune* and other reporters scars from injuries suffered on the job.

"Today we described to the media and the activists we met with after the picket line the huge economic pressures all miners are under," said Ana María Sánchez, one of the Co-op miners. "We have organized ourselves into committees of miners: Picket Line Maintenance, Food Bank, Outreach, and an Emergencies committee that I am a member of that makes sure no one gets evicted, nor their gas or electricity is cut off. We have organized a clinic to charge us less for care and medicine. We make sure no kid is without medicine and we already had an abscessed tooth to deal with," she explained.

"But the economic pressure is baring down on every miner," Sánchez continued. "Everything we have gotten so far has made it possible for us to make it this far, but people must realize that most of us have had a total income of $100 in six weeks of struggle. A number of us have gotten part-time and full-time jobs and more are needed. We are here in Salt Lake to organize people to help us get the means we need to maintain the fight. Meeting people like Michael Lester, from the AFL-CIO Community Services, was important," she concluded.

"Both the picket and the meeting were very good," said Jesús Salazar, a leader of the fight at Co-op. "You can see what is possible. We asked the folks at the meeting for some gas money and we got over $300 in donations just at that meeting. We need to come back to Salt Lake to keep the pressure on the Kingstons."

The meeting took place at the Jubilee Center in downtown Salt Lake City, reported Francisco Picado, a UMWA Local 1984 miner who works at the Deserado mine near Rangely, Colorado. Picado has been assigned by the UMWA to help with the organization of the struggle at Co-op. "The meeting decided to organize a big rally around November 29 and to continue to do smaller actions at the University of Utah and at some of the Kingston locations between now and then," he said.

Militant/John Langford

Co-op miners at trailer on picket line, late October.

"We're going to keep this battle going until they [the Kingstons] come into the 21st century," UMWA International organizer Jim Stevenson told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "The dark days are gone."

U.S. Congress bans abortion procedure

BY SAM MANUEL

With wide bipartisan support, U.S. Congress has approved legislation that would outlaw a specific abortion procedure for the first time since abortion was legalized in 1973. The Senate approved the measure by a vote of 64-34 October 21. The House of Representatives had passed it earlier with a 281-142 margin. Seventeen Senate Democrats joined 47 Republicans voting for the bill.

"I applaud the Senate for joining the House in passing the ban," said U.S. president George Bush October 21. "I look forward to signing it into law."

The bill would impose fines and up to two years in prison for anyone who performs the procedure known in the medical field as intact dilation and evacuation or D&E, a technique used in performing late-term abortions. The bill would also allow husbands of women who undergo the procedure, as well as parents of women under 18, to sue their relatives and doctors.

Bush reiterated he would sign the bill October 28, adding, "I don't think the culture has changed to the extent that the American people or Congress would totally ban abortions." Capitalist politicians opposed to abortion rights have stated they will introduce further bills to restrict abortion.

One of these proposals is the so-called "Unborn Victims of Violence Act," which classifies a fetus as a "crime victim" if injured or killed while a federal crime is committed. In a decision that potentially has bearing on the constitutionality of the law, the Supreme Court in October refused to hear an appeal on behalf of a woman in South Carolina who was imprisoned after being convicted of "killing her stillborn child" as a result of her addiction to crack cocaine. Her lawyers noted that no other woman has been convicted of homicide after suffering a stillbirth.

The "Abortion Non-Discrimination Act" would allow a range of health-care companies and providers to refuse to "perform, pay for, or provide referrals" for abortions. It already passed the House in 2002 with strong backing from both capitalist parties by a margin of 229 to 189. A third bill, called the Child Custody Protection Act, makes it a federal crime for any person other than a parent or legal guardian to transport a minor across a state line in order to get an abortion when it circumvents a state law requiring parental notification.

Anti abortion groups like the National Right to Life Committee and the American Life League applauded the bill and Bush's pledge to sign it. Edward Szymkowiak of the American Life League said his group would like to see a ban on all third-trimester abortions, with no exception made for rape or incest. Douglas Johnson of the National Right to Life Committee backed moves to make transporting a minor across state line to get an abortion a crime.

As in past congressional sessions, sponsors of the late-term abortion ban described the procedure in detail while displaying graphic photos of fetuses in utero. "I hope your sensibilities are shaken to the point where I don't have to explain," exclaimed Sen. Richard Santorum.

Versions of the bill making the procedure illegal have been debated in Congress since 1995 and passed in both houses in 1996 and 1997. Those bills were vetoed by former president William Clinton because they did not contain exemptions to protect the life and health of the mother. After vetoing a version of the bill in 1996 Clinton said that if legislators, "will help me with language here … I will happily sign this bill."

The current bill contains no exemption to protect the life and health of the mother. Abortion rights groups such as Planned Parenthood, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the National Abortion Federation all plan legal challenges on the grounds Clinton used. These groups also argue that the broad language of the legislation could be used to cast a chilling effect on more common abortion procedures. In 2000 the Supreme Court struck down a similar law in Nebraska banning the procedure because it contained no exemption to protect the woman's health.

National Organization for Women president Kim Gandy urged supporters of abortion rights to mobilize for a planned mass march in Washington next April.

Further reading from Pathfinder

Abortion is a Woman's Right!
By Pat Grogan and others

Why abortion rights are central to the fight for the full emancipation of women.

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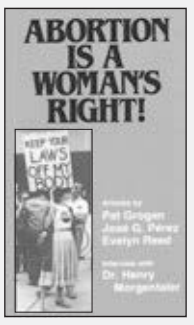

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The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 40

Closing news date: November 4, 2003

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Published weekly except for one week in January, July, September and December.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014; Fax (212) 594-1018.
E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The Militant **website** is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States**: for one-year subscription send $45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send $65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send $80.

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Canada: Send Canadian $75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 1237 Jean-Talon est, Montréal, QC. Postal Code: H2R 1W1.

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Grocery workers dig in for long strike

BY JAMES VINCENT

LOS ANGELES—Some 70,000 striking and locked-out grocery workers in California are digging in for what could be a long strike. On picket lines workers are talking about the real possibility of a several-month strike as they head into the holiday period of November and December, the busiest time of the year.

No negotiations have been held since the strike began on October 11, and none are scheduled. The outcome of this labor battle is being watched closely, and not just by grocery workers.

About 83,000 grocery workers have picket lines up in five states. Contract negotiations are bogged down in all these states, with defense of health benefits the main issue. The bosses' main aim is to shift the burden of rising health-care costs to workers.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) launched the strike against Vons and Pavilions stores, both owned by Safeway Inc., October 11. The following day Albertson's and Kroger Co.'s Ralphs stores locked out their workers in a show of support for the Safeway bosses. In all, some 859 stores have been affected by the walkout in Southern California and parts of central California.

Despite an unrelenting barrage of anti-union full-page ads in local newspapers, and widely discounted commercials to lure customers to break the strike, most people are honoring the picket lines and shopping elsewhere.

Almost every day the union is organizing rallies and beefing up picketing at different stores. Much of the solidarity is spontaneous too. Erik Hirning, picket captain at Ralphs in Long Beach, told this reporter that students from the California State University Long Beach campus have been joining their picket lines. "One campus group, La Raza, has been coming down on Sundays," Hirning said. "They brought pizza and water for us."

"We're getting a lot of support from longshoremen, Teamsters, transit workers, school bus drivers," said Marvell Gilmore, a bagger from Ralphs in Long Beach. "The public supports us because they know we deserve a lot better and that they are trying to take health care from everyone."

The *Daily Bruin Online* reported that 40 UCLA students, chanting "shop somewhere else," staged a pro-UFCW protest inside a Ralphs store near the campus.

The union estimates that traffic at the three chains has plummeted by 75 percent. Deliveries of food and other products are down too, hours are being cut, and goods are either being thrown away or donated to charities. The UFCW also estimates that the three chains are losing about $100 million a week in sales. The three grocery chains have so far not released information on how the strike has impacted business.

Outside Ralphs in Monterey Park, locked-out worker Ray Bustamante said, "Business is way down inside. The deli is closed. The bakery is shut and the meat department is closed."

The third week of October, Albertson's sought to win a temporary restraining order to restrict or eliminate pickets at its stores. In a victory for the union, this request was turned down by a Santa Ana Superior Court. The judge has set a November 12 hearing for a preliminary injunction.

In a related development, the union filed two lawsuits against the grocery bosses in an attempt to force the companies to continue funding the health-care plan. The union says that without this funding the health trust fund will go bankrupt. The companies report that they will no longer make monthly contributions. The struck companies say they made their last payment of $40 million October 20.

All along, the grocery chains have been playing hardball. Safeway Inc. chief executive Steven Burd said the contract offer from the big chains was "as good as it gets." Burd, who has a reputation as a union buster, added, "They're not going to see a better offer than this. This offer does a marvelous job of protecting existing employees. They still have Cadillac benefits when it's over."

The so-called "Cadillac benefits" were rejected by 97 percent of union members. Through slick advertising the grocery bosses are portraying UFCW workers as unreasonable by not accepting "the new reality of health care." One of their ads proclaims, "More than 90 percent of American workers now pay part of their own health-care premiums." They claim that grocery workers will be paying a "very small portion"—$5 for individuals and $15 for families per week.

Picketers are quick to expose company propaganda. "They keep saying we're on strike because we don't want to pay $5 or $15 toward our health care premium," said Dave Narasky, who works at Albertson's. "If that was all it was, we would accept it. But they want to make us pay 50 percent on hospital visits and prescriptions and make large co-payments on visits to the doctor."

In the previous contract, if a grocery worker had a $20,000 hospital bill, he or she would be covered 100 percent. Now they would be responsible for paying $10,000.

The union says the $5 premium could rise to $95 a week to maintain the current level of health coverage. Right now no worker pays any portion.

What's more, it is much worse for new hires. The union says the "new hire rate would result in approximately a 75 percent benefit reduction." The grocery bosses would pay into the health fund between $8,400 and $11,000 a year for a full-time worker, but new hires would receive only $2,808 a year, a 64 percent reduction. The union figures that the companies would rake in hundreds of millions of dollars in additional profits over the life of the three-year contract if they succeed in forcing through these proposals, while workers will take a big hit.

The union's chief benefits consultant, Sidney Abrams, called it a "pathetic sham of a health plan" that many would simply opt not to buy. The grocery bosses' proposal for new hires here would fit the Wal-Mart pattern, where only half the retail giant's workforce of 1.2 million is covered by a health plan.

Teachers walk out in Paraguay and Chile

Teachers in Chile (above) and Paraguay held nationwide strikes in October. In Paraguay, teachers walked out October 27 to protest government efforts to force them to work a minimum of 40 years before retirement. The current law allows retirement after 25 years of service. Oscar Duarte Frutos, Paraguay's president, called the strike—which has shut down schools across the country—"irresponsible... since only 10 percent of the population make it to retirement." In Chile, teachers walked out for two days October 23–24 to press for a wage increase and to demand the government halt steps to privatize education.

Mechanics stand up to L.A. transit bosses

Continued from front page

posal, published in the company newsletter *The Communicator*, has been mailed to all MTA employees.

"We call it the mis-*Communicator*," said strike captain Forrest Belmont, a member of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1277. "Sending the offer directly to strikers is a negative development and it is not sitting well with any of us." Belmont was on picket duty in front of the main rail terminal here October 30. He also pointed out that the MTA's latest offer "isn't that different from the one we rejected last January."

The breakdown of talks also came with MTA threats that by declaring an "impasse" the bosses can impose a contract and hire strikebreakers. "MTA officials said they had no intention of doing either, but that did nothing to soothe the fears of striking workers," said an article in the October 29 *Los Angeles Times.*

After rejecting four concession contract offers, members of Local 1277, which represents 2,000 maintenance workers and 500 retirees, walked out on October 14. Nearly 5,000 MTA bus drivers, train operators, and clerks—all of whom are unionized—are honoring the ATU picket lines.

The contract of the United Transportation Union Local 1563 (UTU), which represents more than 4,000 bus drivers, has also expired. The drivers are not near a contract agreement with the MTA either.

Another 250 bus drivers employed by First Transit went on strike for higher wages October 15. Teamsters Local 572 represents these bus drivers, who are contracted out to the MTA.

Manuel Guzmán, a bus driver and UTU member, said it "was just plain wrong for the MTA to go around the union. No bus driver I know accepts that. They are trying to break the union plain and simple."

The strike has shut down the third-largest mass transit system in the United States. About 400,000 people use the bus, subway, and light rail lines here every day. In 2000 the bus drivers struck the MTA for more than a month. Since 1960, transit workers have shut down the company 10 times.

Only a small handful of mechanics have crossed the picket line. Strikers say that not one bus driver has crossed the line.

The main contract issue is MTA's refusal to adequately fund the union's Health and Welfare Trust Fund. In addition, the employers want more control over the fund, which is currently run by the union. ATU officials say the fund is in the red by $500,000 per month because the company doesn't pay enough into it to cover the cost of care.

The MTA is also demanding that union members pay more for medical insurance. Union officials say they are willing to propose workers pay $71 per month—a substantial increase over the $6 that mechanics pay now. The MTA insists this is not enough.

Belmont said about a quarter of the union membership of 2,500 is retired. The MTA is attempting to divide retirees from those currently working, he said, pointing to the two-page MTA final offer in which the company will only increase payments for medical care for "active employees." These increases are not enough to keep up with rising health-care costs, Belmont said. "They are trying to get us to foot the bill."

The MTA is taking a hard line. "There is no more money that can be or will be added to this offer," said MTA chief executive officer Roger Snoble in an October 27 press release. "We have had to face the stark reality of living within our means and doing more with less." "It's a tragedy for the tens of thousands of people who rely on public transportation to get to and from work," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, who chairs the MTA board. "It is particularly galling that some of the highest paid public employees are holding some of the lowest paid people in America hostage. It is unjustified and unconscionable."

The big-business press has chimed in as well. *The Long Beach Press Telegram* editorialized that "MTA employees are taking hostages, and hostage-taking is a tactic of thugs. Whether or not one agrees with the union position, it's not right to use public transportation riders and the regional economy as pawns."

A *Los Angeles Times* editorial stated, "Even residents who wouldn't recognize a bus stop if they ran into the sign found their lives disrupted when their nannies couldn't get to work, and so they couldn't either."

"The media is trying to brand us as criminals, that we are holding people in the city hostage," said bus driver Manuel Guzmán. "If we're such a threat maybe they should get Homeland Security on us and send us to Guantánamo."

Guzmán was happy to see that nearly 2,000 county workers staged a protest in downtown Los Angeles earlier in the week. Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 660, which represents about 50,000 county workers, called the action. There are 90,000 county employees, nearly all in unions whose contracts have expired. As in the United Food and Commercial Workers grocery walkout (see article on this page) and the transit strike, the main issue is opposition by workers to company demands for health benefit "take-aways."

GDP growth nears zero in 'euro-zone'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Close to zero growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2003—that's the ominous reality facing the 12 countries that use the euro currency, according to officials of the European Union (EU). The report puts a figure to the experience of millions of working people across the continent who are already unemployed or face a tightening financial squeeze.

Governments in many of these countries are using economic stagnation as cover for a new round of cuts on pensions and other social benefits. On November 1, 100,000 people marched in Berlin to protest a parliamentary vote in favor of a far-reaching program of cuts in the social wage.

Among the dozen euro-zone countries are France, Germany, and Italy. The latter two were officially declared to be in recession earlier this year. All three face official unemployment of around 10 percent. Other countries that make up the euro-zone are Austria, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands.

"The average GDP growth in the euro area is expected to be a mere 0.4 percent in 2003," said EU finance commissioner Pedro Solbes October 29. That's half the minimal growth recorded last year. For the EU as a whole, he said, "A somewhat better 0.8 percent is expected." The United Kingdom, Sweden, and Denmark are EU members but have not adopted the euro.

Solbes warned that the French and German governments were expected to break the guidelines spelled out in the "stability and growth pact"—an agreement Berlin and Paris had imposed on other member governments of the EU. For the third year in a row their budget deficit will exceed 3 percent of GDP. The *Financial Times* reported that Solbes "also warned that Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK were dangerously close to the pact's deficit limit."

The big-business daily reported that the Austrian and Dutch governments have argued unavailingly that penalties should be imposed on Berlin, Paris, and Rome for their infraction of EU rules.

Both the Italian and German governments have announced new rounds of budget cuts. Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi has said that $19 billion has to be slashed from the budget to avoid going over the 3 percent deficit mark. On October 24 several union federations organized a four-hour general strike to oppose the government's plans to raise the age of retirement.

Kroger chain locks out workers in three states

BY MARTY RESSLER

MORGANTOWN, West Virginia—"I went from being considered a middle-income worker to a lower-income worker while working at Kroger's, and part-time workers I work next to are living in poverty. It's not right." So said Bernie White, 50, a non-foods worker at the Earl Core Road Kroger store here.

White is one of 3,300 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 400 who were locked out by the giant grocery chain on October 13 after voting by a large majority to strike. Forty-four stores in West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky are affected by the lockout. Most are closed, except for the pharmacies and bank branches inside. Workers picket the stores six days a week.

"Kroger earned $2.5 billion dollars over the past several years, and has $562 million in profits so far this year," said Local 400 president Jim Lowthers in a press release on the day the lockout began. "Yet it is underfunding employee benefit plans. Kroger's policy apparently is 'Billions for Profits, No Benefits for People.'"

Marianne McFadden, 39, who works in the store's floral department, said that after five years with the company she makes only $6.55 an hour, "but with full health-care coverage, I didn't want to complain." Now she is walking the picket line because of Kroger's plans to cut health coverage.

Bernie White chimed in, "They used to pay us double time on Sunday, but no more. If you get 40 hours in a week, they will pay time and a half for Sundays and holidays. But part-time workers routinely work Sundays and holidays for straight time."

One of the pickets at another Kroger's here, J.C. Davis, 23, a senior at West Virginia University, told the *Militant* that he has worked as a part-time stocker at the Patteson Avenue store for four years and makes $6.45.

UFCW representative Chuck Miller said, "we've received donations of at least $500 from all of the union locals in Morgantown." The grocery workers have also received food and financial support from UFCW locals in Colorado and West Virginia. Members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical, and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) Local 5-957 at the nearby Mylan Pharmaceutical Co. have pledged to help picket. Workers described other examples of solidarity, including contributions by former customers and donations of food by local restaurants.

Militant/Marty Ressler

Picket at Kroger grocery store in Morgantown, West Virginia. From right: Joe Auvil, Cathy Hurt, Bernie White, Sherry Crawford, Marianne McFadden, and a supporter.

Union miners in this coal-mining region have also backed the locked-out workers. Pickets reported that 40 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) showed up to help picket at a store in Bridgeport, West Virginia. The union has also received letters of support from UMWA Local 1717 and Freddie Maynard, the chairman of UMWA District 17, Sub-District No. 2 Food Association. Maynard suggested in his letter that Kroger "stop paying its 'Big Wheels' millions of dollars in bonuses" so they could fund health care for their employees.

Working people are aware of the legacy of struggles by the UMWA. Keith Hoff, 40, who has worked at the Patteson Avenue Kroger for nine years, described how coal miners' strikes in the 1970s impressed him as a boy. And Marianne McFadden said, "My brother in law was killed in the mines in 1996, and he was union all the way. If he were alive he would be here standing with us."

Marty Ressler is a member of UFCW Local 23, and works in Arnold, Pennsylvania.

Chicago meat strikers: 'No slave wages!'

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

CHICAGO HEIGHTS, Illinois—"I'm on strike because I support all the production workers. They're fighting against the company's abuse." This was the sentiment of Jorge Vasquez, a driver at T & J Meat Packing. After working 10 years at the company, Vasquez is one of the few workers who makes a double-digit hourly wage. "One worker here has 30 years with the company and makes $11.25 an hour," said Vasquez. "Medical insurance for a family costs $67 a week."

At 5:00 a.m. on October 10, 34 members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1 walked out and began picketing the plant, which has a workforce of 37. Union representative Oscar Sandoval said that after holding off negotiations for months on a contract that expired almost a year ago, the company proposed a two-year contract with raises of 50 cents and 10 cents over the first two years. Workers would receive a $100 bonus in the second year.

A few days later the bosses offered a three-year contract with raises of 25 cents in each of the first two years, 10 cents in the third, and no bonus. Several of the strikers said that this offer was the final straw. T & J Meat Packing is a cut-and-kill plant that processes mostly pigs, but also lambs and goats.

Rumaldo Acevedo, who has worked there for 15 years and is the shop steward at the plant, spoke to the *Militant* about the speed-up that the bosses have in carried out over that time. Ten years ago 13 butchers killed some 200 pigs in an eight-hour shift, he said. Today, the same number of butchers process 600 pigs over 11 hours.

Strikers explained that wages begin at $6.50 an hour and raises are few and far between. Juan Gutierrez, 25, said that he started at $6 an hour four years ago and now makes $7. "We're fighting for a raise and also better treatment," he says. "Sometimes the owner comes down to the line and yells and swears at the workers to work faster."

One striker who did not give his name said that because the workers are Mexican the boss thinks he can treat them like slaves. He explained that he was in a three-month walkout in Mexico in 1979, and that the strikers then had won a raise and benefits. "That was a great experience where the workers came together," he said, "just like we are here."

The workers are picketing 24 hours a day. Near their picket line, at the entrance to the plant, is a store selling meat to the public. In a couple of hours on the picket line this reporter saw only a small handful of people drive by the meat packers to shop. Two women who drove up stopped to hear what they had to say. One asked where else she could buy meat in quantities. When the striker told her the closest place was near downtown Chicago, she said that she wouldn't go that far, but added, "I'm not going in here either. Good luck to you guys," and drove off.

Oscar Sandoval explained that truck drivers in the Teamsters had refused to cross their line. One driver from a grocery store at first allowed his vehicle to be driven in by management personnel from T & J Meat Packing, ready for loading. After the strikers explained their fight to him, he called his boss, who agreed that he would bring the truck back empty.

Sandoval and several strikers reported that before the strike, the owner, John Lilovich, tried to split the workers from their union. A few days into the strike he walked out to the picket line and pointed to several workers and demanded they come with him. When Sandoval said these workers were union members on strike Lilovich protested that they were his employees. None of the workers moved and Lilovich walked back to the plant.

Ernest Mailhot is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 1546 in Chicago.

Garment workers win NLRB ruling

BY JANET POST

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—A panel of National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) judges has ordered the reopening of the Libro Shirt plant in Lykens, Pennsylvania, and the rehiring of the workers who lost their jobs when the plant closed down seven months ago during a strike by the workers. In his September 12 report for the NLRB panel, Judge Benjamin Schlesinger also ordered the company to resume negotiations with the union for a new contract.

Libro Shirt manager Leonard Springer was given an October 10 deadline to appeal the ruling, which has been extended into November. Sue Snyder, a sewer at the plant, told the *Militant*, "I hope he does the right thing, but he's never done the right thing in the past."

The 89 workers, who are members of UNITE Local 317-C, went on strike for nine weeks on January 7 after rejecting the company's contract offer. Union members turned down the company's proposed five-cent wage raise and its demand that the garment workers pay half of their health-care coverage premiums. The old contract expired Aug. 31, 2002.

The NLRB also ordered the company to pay back wages to the laid-off workers, and ruled that Local 317-C president Faye Shutt should be reinstated. She was fired after filing a grievance against Libro Shirt owner Levanthal Ltd., for subcontracting work to its plant in Jamestown, Tennessee. The union charges the company with sending "union-made" labels from Lykens to the nonunion Jamestown plant to be sewn onto the shirts there.

Levanthal was found in violation of federal law for declaring an impasse in contract negotiations when none existed, closing the plant and transferring work to Park Shirt in retaliation for the workers going on strike, and announcing the closing of the plant without prior notice to the union.

Shutt told the *Pottsville Republican*, "I was thrilled with the judge's decision. I just can't stand injustice. You have to do what you have to do."

Janet Post is a member of UNITE at Hollander Home Fashions in Frackville, Pennsylvania.

10,000 rally October 25 in Washington to protest imperialist occupation of Iraq

Militant/Glova Scott

Some 10,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C., October 25 from cities across the United States to protest the imperialist occupation of Iraq and the USA Patriot Act. The rally was called by International ANSWER Coalition and United for Peace and Justice. A West Coast action was held the same day in San Francisco. Among the featured speakers were former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, Democratic Party presidential candidate Alfred Sharpton, representatives of solidarity groups affiliated to the sponsors, and family members of GIs in Iraq who call for supporting "our troops" by bringing them home.

CALENDAR

Pathfinder Bookshop 15th Anniversary Celebration

London, November 15

Speakers include:

- ***Joel Britton***—Los Angeles Pathfinder Bookstore. National Committee, Socialist Workers party
- ***Jonathan Silberman***—Pathfinder London. Central Committee, Communist League
- ***Cuban Embassy representative***
- ***Debbie Delange***—Pathfinder sales volunteer

Pathfinder Bookshop
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Waterloo, Southwark Tubes
Opposite Young Vic Theatre

6:00 p.m. Fund-raising dinner
7:00 p.m. Program
Suggested donation £5

Day-to-day effort needed to make sales drive goals

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

With three weeks to go in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription campaign, distributors will need to step up their efforts across the board to bring the drive home.

The campaign to date shows the potential for winning new readers and consolidating a strong subscription base of workers, farmers, youth, and others who follow and are influenced by the revolutionary socialist press. Workers on picket lines and at plant gates, students on campuses, and participants in protests against the U.S.–British occupation of Iraq have all subscribed.

In spite of these encouraging results, however, the international totals for the two socialist periodicals and for sales of Pathfinder books to subscribers have lagged over the past couple of weeks. *Militant* totals stand at 54 percent—9 percent behind schedule, with three weeks to go. *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions are at 60 percent of the goal, or 3 percent short of pace. In addition, 208 books have been sold along with subscriptions—107 behind where we should be.

Betsey Stone described how campaigners in Los Angeles had presented the two publications in door-to-door sales. "We found that showing people a combination of the front covers of the current *Perspectiva Mundial* with the photo of the locked-out workers at the Co-op mine in Utah and the *Militant* with the headline on the immigration raids at Wal-Mart got across a key part of what these publications are," she said.

This helped illustrate the potential that immigrant workers have to strengthen the labor movement and the way that the bosses and their government try to break up working-class unity by victimizing those classed as "illegal," Stone said.

The Co-op miners' fight is having an impact in coalfield communities out West, reported Ilona Gersh. Back in Detroit on November 2, she spoke about the sales team in the western coal region that she had participated in over the previous week.

"We volunteers divided up into two teams," she said. "One headed out for portal and door-to-door sales in Gallup, New Mexico, and the other was focused in Kayenta, Arizona, where there are two coal mines—the Kayenta mine and the Black Mesa mine.

"That team did several portal sales and set up a literature table at a grocery store, selling three subscriptions to the *Militant*," Gersh said. "One was to a Kayenta coal miner who remarked how impressed he was that most of the Co-op miners struggling to build a new UMWA local are immigrant workers. 'That wouldn't have happened a few years ago,' he said. 'The mine bosses try to keep us isolated and scared.'"

The miner had met the locked-out Co-op workers, Gersh reported, and commented, "They are real fighters. We're discussing how to support them." He bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes. A worker at the Black Mesa Mine and a teacher at the grammar school on the Navajo Nation also subscribed.

Capitalism's World Disorder was also the choice of a former worker at Hollander Home Fashions in Frackville, Pennsylvania, after she subscribed to the *Militant*, said Betsy Farley in a November 3 interview. Reinforced by two campaigners from Newark, New Jersey, and New York, *Militant* teams sold at two coal mines in the area—the first such sales "in a long time," Farley said.

Militant/Ilona Gersh

Rebecca Williamson, from Chicago, selling *Militant* outside Dugout mine near East Carbon, Utah, in October.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial
Fall Subscription Drive
September 27–November 23: Week 5 of 8

Country	Militant Goal	Militant Sold	%	PM Goal	PM Sold	Book Goal	Book Sold
NEW ZEALAND							
Auckland	**15**	**11**	**73%**	**1**	**0**	**5**	**2**
Christchurch	**12**	**8**	**67%**	**1**	**0**	**6**	**0**
N.Z. total	**27**	**19**	**70%**	**2**	**0**	**11**	**2**
SWEDEN							
Stockholm	8	4	50%	5	5	5	4
Gothenburg	10	6	60%	2	4	5	3
SWEDEN Total	18	10	56%	7	9	10	7
UNITED STATES							
Omaha	**18**	**16**	**89%**	**38**	**25**	**15**	**9**
Tucson	**7**	**6**	**86%**	**2**	**1**		**0**
Boston	**35**	**29**	**83%**	**30**	**23**	**25**	**20**
Utah	**10**	**8**	**80%**	**10**	**8**	**8**	**3**
Des Moines	**25**	**18**	**72%**	**23**	**20**	**15**	**10**
Houston	**25**	**18**	**72%**	**10**	**8**	**20**	**13**
New York	**70**	**48**	**69%**	**35**	**28**	**40**	**22**
NE Pennsylvania	**20**	**13**	**65%**	**8**	**0**	**10**	**2**
Washington	**25**	**16**	**64%**	**12**	**7**	**12**	**2**
Philadelphia	**30**	**19**	**63%**	**7**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Detroit	25	15	60%	8	5	15	5
San Francisco	50	29	58%	20	6	40	9
Chicago	40	23	58%	25	15	25	7
Newark	55	32	58%	20	12	25	21
Seattle	25	14	56%	6	1	10	4
Western Col.	15	8	53%	10	4	8	5
Cleveland	15	7	47%	5	4	10	5
Los Angeles	60	28	47%	30	16	35	8
Twin Cities	45	20	44%	35	10	15	0
Pittsburgh	25	11	44%	2	3	12	0
Atlanta	40	17	43%	17	10	25	10
Tampa	20	8	40%	8	1	10	2
Birmingham	18	5	28%	3	2	5	8
Miami	42	10	24%	12	4	21	0
U.S. total	740	418	56%	376	219	408	173
CANADA							
Montreal	12	7	58%	6	4	15	3
Toronto	25	13	52%	5	2	15	2
Vancouver	30	13	43%	5	2	15	4
CANADA total	67	33	49%	16	8	45	9
UNITED KINGDOM							
Cent. Scotland	8	4	50%	0	0	4	4
London	25	11	44%	5	3	10	9
UK total	33	15	42%	5	3	10	12
ICELAND	15	5	33%	1	0	10	4
AUSTRALIA	30	12	40%	5	1	15	3
Int'l totals	**930**	**512**	**54%**	**401**	**241**	**509**	**208**
Goal/Should be	**950**	**594**	**63%**	**400**	**252**	**500**	**315**

IN THE UNIONS

	Militant Goal	Militant Sold	%	PM Goal	PM Sold	Book Goal	Book Sold
AUSTRALIA							
AMIEU	4	0	0%			1	0
CANADA							
UNITE	3	1	33%	4	0	4	0
UFCW	10	0	0%	2	1	8	0
Total	13	1	8%	6	1	12	0
ICELAND							
Hlíf	1	1	100%			1	1
NEW ZEALAND							
MWU	2	0	0%	0		1	0
NDU	2	1	50%	0		1	0
Total	4	1	25%	0		2	0
SWEDEN							
Livs	3	0	0%	2	1	3	0
UNITED STATES							
UMWA	20	8	40%	3	3	8	1
UNITE	25	8	32%	22	8	12	1
UFCW	50	18	36%	75	43	30	11
Total	95	34	36%	75	54	30	13

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; Hlíf—General Workers Union in Hafnarfjördur; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America.

Auto workers strike in Brazil

AP/José Luis da Conceicao

Assembly line workers at Ford Motor Co. in São Bernardo do Campo, Brazil, raise their arms to vote to walk off their jobs after rejecting the bosses' contract proposal on October 29.

Continued from front page

other countries in Latin America, workers in Brazil face deteriorating economic conditions due to a worldwide capitalist crisis. Inflation has been eating up the purchasing power of wages. Between March 2002 and March of this year, real wages declined by nearly 8 percent. Unemployment is now up to 13 percent. The actions by the auto workers were preceded by warning strikes by thousands of office workers at four plants protesting the bosses' proposal for lower wage increases for some of the better paid employees.

The conflict is the sharpest at Volkswagen, the largest private company in Latin America's biggest country, with five plants employing 26,800 workers. In December 2001, after a week-long strike, auto workers at VW in Brazil accepted company demands to cut wages and working hours by 15 percent supposedly to prevent 3,000 workers from losing their jobs. After the concessions, VW officials said "job security" would be tied to overall sales. Volkswagen is now in the process of eliminating 4,000 jobs in the country.

Workers at the four companies together produce some 1,700 vehicles and 200 engines a day, one third of the country's auto production.

About 95,000 unionized metalworkers in the São Bernardo do Campo area in São Paolo state are seeking new contracts. Workers at General Motors have threatened to join the strike if the company does not meet their demands, according to *Reuters*.

At the request of the auto bosses a Brazilian judge ordered the union back to the negotiating table October 30, threatening to issue his own decision if an agreement is not reached by November 4. After a day on strike, auto workers at Scania, a Swedish truck manufacturer, returned to work when the company agreed to an 18 percent wage increase.

ABC union officials announced November 1 that they had reached a tentative agreement with Ford and DaimlerChrysler. The two have reportedly offered an 18.1 percent wage raise. It is not clear, however, whether this increase would go to all workers. The bosses' earlier offers limited the increases to employees with wages below 1,050 reales ($362) per week and proposed a fixed raise of 165 reales per week for anyone over that, which the union opposed.

An agreement with VW had not been reached as this issue went to press. "Volkswagen is the most intransigent of the companies," said Jose Lopez Feijoo of the Metalworkers union.

The strike is the biggest since President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office in January. In an economy that remains mired in crisis, working people are the hardest hit. In addition to the drop in the purchasing power of workers' wages caused by inflation, unemployment has risen to almost 13 percent. Nearly 50 million people, or 30 percent of the population, live under the official poverty level or in extreme poverty, defined by the government as making less than a dollar a day.

In an attempt to attract foreign investors and stimulate the economy, the da Silva government has granted tax breaks to auto companies and lowered the country's lending rates. The *New York Times* reported car sales in September were 25 percent higher than in August.Big-business analysts have noted the timing of the strike is a "well-chosen" one. "Earlier this year, a strike would have been welcomed by the manufacturers," said Marcus Stricker, of A.T. Kearney in São Paolo. "People would have stayed home and they wouldn't have to be paid."

Despite the conjunctural uptick in sales, the auto industry in Brazil cannot escape the pressures of the industry's chronic overcapacity and the sharp competition among the auto bosses worldwide. A campaign to cut labor costs has been at the center of the bosses' offensive to shore up profit rates.

The auto giants have also been looking more and more towards China to invest and expand their markets.

Beijing Hyundai Auto Co., a joint venture between a Chinese enterprise and south Korea's largest auto maker, would boost its production capacity to 600,000 units per year by 2008 from 50,000 units currently being produced.

The Chinese *People's Daily* on line reported that auto makers in China produced some 167,000 cars in April, up 84 percent over the same period last year.

Toyota, Honda, Ford, and DaimlerChrysler are among those setting up shop in China.

Polisario holds congress in liberated zone

BY PAUL PEDERSON

TIFARITI, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic—"We are third- or fourth-class citizens in our own country," said Mohamed Cheikh. "The Saharawis who live in the occupied territory are persecuted by Morocco for asserting basic rights. Anyone who speaks out for independence is thrown in jail."

Cheikh was among the hundreds of delegates attending the 11th Congress of the Polisario Front, the organization leading the struggle for independence in Western Sahara, held here October 12–16. He is the general secretary of Ugtsario, a trade union federation that organizes Western Saharan workers.

This was the first Polisario Front congress held in the liberated territory of Western Sahara—just 40 miles away from the wall marking the border with the Moroccan-occupied zone.

Some 2,000 people attended the October 12 opening session of the congress. Delegates included those elected from each district in the camps, soldiers elected from each military region, army officers and government officials, and representatives of Saharawi youth, women's, and trade union organizations. Delegations from a number of countries that recognize Western Sahara's right to independence, and other international visitors and press also attended.

In his opening remarks, Polisario Front general secretary Mohamed Abdelaziz reviewed the accomplishments of the independence movement since the last congress four years ago. He reaffirmed Polisario's commitment to fight for the liberation of the entire Western Sahara.

The delegates met for two days to vote on a program of action for the coming period and elect a new leadership.

Since 1975 the Moroccan government has occupied this nation, with backing from Washington, Madrid, and Paris. The U.S. government has been the leading arms supplier and military adviser to the Moroccan king, providing more than $1 billion in military aid to the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in the last quarter century.

A military camp of the Saharawi Popular Liberation Army (SPLA) today, Tifariti is a town in the northern part of the liberated zone. It is a strip of territory comprising about 20 percent of Western Sahara, which

Militant photos by Paul Pederson

Above, Saharawi women celebrate opening of Polisario Front congress October 12 in Tifariti, Western Sahara. Right, soldiers of the Saharawi Popular Liberation Army in military camp in liberated zone.

Militant/Paul Pederson

Polisario general secretary Mohamed Abdelaziz speaks at opening session October 12.

Polisario liberated in the course of the 16-year war with Morocco. Most SPLA soldiers are stationed in the zone. The bulk of the Saharawi population—almost 200,000 people—have been living in camps around the city of Tindouf in southwest Algeria since the Moroccan invasion of Western Sahara 28 years ago.

Many delegates came from the camps in Tindouf—a nine-hour bone-rattling trip across open desert. Marking the border from Algeria into the free Saharawi territory is an outpost flying the green, red, black, and white flag of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

History of struggle

As with many nations in Africa, the borders of Western Sahara were drawn up officially by the main imperialist powers in Europe at the Berlin Conference of 1885. Spain's claim to Western Sahara was codified at that gathering.

In the late 1960s, Madrid began to face a challenge to its rule as the people of Western Sahara launched a struggle for independence. The post–World War II anticolonial movement in Africa and Asia provided the impetus.

The Organization for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Ouad ed-Dahab—two regions that make up Western Sahara—was founded in 1967. This group, which called for independence, was hounded and brutally repressed by the Spanish colonial administration, which murdered its central leader, Mohammed Sidi Ibrahim Bassiri, in 1970.

The Polisario Front (a Spanish acronym for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro) was born in 1973 and launched a guerilla war against Spanish rule. Its central founder was a young student named El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed. Polisario attracted thousands of Saharawis to its banner, who began to deal blows that weakened Madrid's grip on the territory.

In the fall of in 1975, the governments of Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania signed an agreement in which Madrid divided its colony between the two neighboring African nations, granting Morocco the upper two-thirds and Mauritania the lower third. At the same time, King Hassan of Morocco launched an invasion of Western Sahara, settling some 350,000 Moroccans in the territory in a chauvinist campaign called the "Green March," after the color of Islam.

The king demagogically claimed that the marchers would be armed only with "the Holy Book of Allah." But an occupying army of 20,000 troops from Morocco's Royal Armed Forces came along with the settlers and began a fierce crackdown against Polisario and other pro-independence Saharawis.

While no longer the direct colonial ruler, Madrid remained the dominant imperialist power in Western Sahara. As part of the handover, Spanish capitalists were guaranteed a 35 percent share in the phosphate deposits at Bu Craa, among the world's richest known reserves of the ore.

The freedom fighters turned their guns against both Morocco and Mauritania. By 1979 Polisario had defeated Mauritania's forces. As the Mauritanian troops pulled out, however, the Moroccan army moved in to occupy the remaining portion of the country.

The war with Morocco lasted until 1991, when both parties agreed to a United Nations–brokered ceasefire. Unable to defeat Polisario militarily, the Moroccan regime, in the decade leading up to the ceasefire, had reverted to a strategy of building massive sand walls to keep the Polisario Front out of Moroccan-occupied territory. By the late 1980s, the Moroccan government had built 1,500 miles of walls around 80 percent of the country.

Participants in the congress were taken to see a section of this wall, about an hour and a half drive from Tifariti. More than 100,000 Moroccan troops are stationed along its perimeter, aided by land mines, night-vision technology, and high-tech motion sensors provided by the Pentagon.

Last February, Washington announced it would increase its direct military aid to Morocco from $5 million in 2003 to $10 million next year. This is on top of much larger arms sales that the Pentagon approves for the kingdom each year. In exchange, Morocco's royal regime has consistently sided with Washington. It sent thousands of troops to Zaire in 1977 to shore up the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko when it faced a crisis, and more recently, the kingdom provided cannon fodder for the NATO-led forces in Bosnia and Kosova. Acting as a loyal pillar of imperialist domination in the region, the Moroccan monarchy has also tried to appropriate and offer for sale the potential oil wealth of Western Sahara.

The possible offshore oil reserves have attracted growing interest from the main competing imperialist powers. In February 2002, the United Nations rejected a bid by the U.S. chemical and oil company Kerr-McGee and the French oil giant TotalFinaElf, to work with the Moroccan regime to begin offshore oil exploration along Western Sahara's coast.

Representatives of an Anglo-Australian oil exploration company, Fusion Oil, which has discovered oil along the coastline of neighboring Mauritania, have signed a deal with Polisario for offshore drilling. Three representatives of this company came to Tifariti during the Polisario congress to continue discussions on Western Sahara's oil wealth.

UN referendum on self-determination

For the past 12 years both sides of the wall separating Western Sahara have been patrolled by a UN-assigned force of 230 soldiers and administrators. During that time, the Moroccan regime has agreed twice to hold a referendum on Western Sahara's independence. Each time, however, the Moroccan rulers have sabotaged the process and tied it up in UN red tape—with the complicity of Washington and Madrid—afraid that the vast majority of Saharawis will vote for independence.

Eight days after the end of the Polisario congress, the Moroccan government confirmed that it would reject a third UN-brokered plan for a referendum. Polisario, which had initially rejected the accord, accepted it in July. The agreement, called Baker Plan II, was drafted by former U.S. secretary of state James Baker, who has been negotiating between the Moroccan monarchy and Polisario as a special UN envoy.

This plan calls for a four- to five-year period in which the Saharawi population would be resettled in Western Sahara. The territory would remain under Moroccan rule but would be granted limited autonomy. At the end of this period, a referendum could be held on independence or continued colonial rule.

In his opening remarks to the congress, Abdelaziz said that the Polisario Front had agreed to "co-operate" with the UN on Baker Plan II not as a "final solution" to the independence struggle, but as "a base for a new process." The independence movement remains "attached to the initial settlement plan," the Polisario leader stated. Signed as part of the 1991 ceasefire, that plan promised a referendum based on the Saharawi population alone.

In a March letter outlining Polisario's position on Baker Plan II, Abdelaziz criticized the United Nations for "caving-in" to Morocco's maneuvers for 12 years. Since the ceasefire, the Moroccan regime has organized what Abdelaziz described as the second and third "Green Marches."

The second occurred in 1991, when the kingdom demanded that 170,000 Moroccans be allowed to vote in the referendum. The third took place months after the Moroccan government had signed a second referendum agreement, the 1997 Houston Accords, also brokered by Baker. In order to undermine the plan, the Moroccan regime brought 50,000 settlers to Western Sahara to be "identified" for the referendum.

As the UN mission assigned to determine who can vote in the referendum was wrapping up the selection process in 2000, the Moroccan government appealed previous UN rulings and submitted a list of 131,000 names that had been previously rejected.

At each turn, Abdelaziz said in the letter, the UN-appointed officials acceded to Morocco's demands and eroded the criteria for who would be allowed to vote, tying up the process.

The Polisario leader told delegates that the Saharawi people "cannot wait indefinitely." He stressed that Polisario will improve the fighting capacity of its armed forces and reach out for expanding international support.

Social changes through struggle

The Polisario gathering opened October 12, the Day of National Unification. On that day in 1975 the sheikhs, or tribal chiefs, swore their allegiance to the Polisario Front.

During the decades of Spanish rule, Madrid had effectively used the tribal divisions and hierarchy to maintain control. But the momentum for independence swept aside these outmoded social forms. In its Program of National Action adopted in 1974, the Polisario Front declared its opposition to "all forms of exploitation." The program called for the abolition of slavery, which continues to exist today in neighboring Mauritania, and an end to the tribute that the majority of the Saharawi people were required to pay to the sheikhs.

Despite the hardships in the refugee camps, Polisario has achieved far-reaching social gains. In the same 1974 declaration, for example, the independence movement proclaimed its commitment to "reestablish the political and social rights of women and open up all perspectives to them." Five years later, Polisario founded the National Union of Saharawi Women. The group has more than 10,000 members today.

The women's federation was also at the center of a literacy campaign initiated by Polisario. As a result, more than 90 percent of Saharawis in the camps and liberated territory are literate today, compared to less than 10 percent during Spanish colonial rule. In Morocco and the occupied territory of Western Sahara, literacy is just above 50 percent today.

Efforts have also been made towards achieving a measure of economic self-sufficiency in the camps. Polisario has set up a poultry plant, and has tried to establish vegetable gardens and raise livestock.

In addition, thousands of Saharawis from the camps have traveled abroad to continue their studies in Algeria, Cuba, and Libya. Many Saharawis this reporter spoke with had received their high school and university education in Cuba.

According to Miriam Mugisa, one of Cuba's representatives to the conference, more than 600 Saharawis study in Cuba today and seven Cuban doctors practice in the camps. Mugisa said that the number of Cuban physicians volunteering in the camps has been reduced because more Saharawi doctors have been trained abroad, many of them in Cuba, and have now assumed most responsibilities here.

This reality has made Polisario a pole of attraction for toilers throughout the region resisting imperialist domination.

Venezuela fishermen fight for living income

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Fisherman in San Carlos district of Cumaná, Venezuela, September 30.

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS AND CAMILO CATALÁN

CUMANÁ, Venezuela—"We are close to getting a co-op, we expect it by the end of the year," said Tomás Blanca, a fisherman here, in the capital of Sucre state, 300 miles west of Caracas, September 30. "With that we will be able to get credits, buy motors and polyvalent boats, and sell the catch directly to the market. Right now the companies resell fish for 2,500 bolivars [$1.60] per kilo after they buy it from us for 500."

Blanca's measured self-confidence that independent fishermen have made a little progress over the last year in implementing the Law on Fishing and Aquaculture was evident among other producers here.

The government passed this bill in 2001. Along with the new agrarian reform law and legislation strengthening state control of oil, gas, and mineral resources that are part of the country's national patrimony, the fishing law has fueled the hostility of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and its backers in Washington against President Hugo Chávez.

The law granted small fishermen exclusive fishing rights up to six nautical miles offshore. In the past, the large fishing companies were allowed by law to operate as close as three miles off the coast. They often came as close as one mile from the shore, by paying off the Coast Guard, Blanca said. With their high-tech equipment they would often scoop up all the fish and leave almost nothing behind for the working fishermen.

"Since last year, there's enough fish for us to catch," said Yorbaris Bermúdez, whose family lives in a tin-roof, dirt-floor house a few feet away from the water in the San Carlos neighborhood of Cumaná, where most residents are fishermen. "That's why almost all the fishermen are *Chavistas*."

The fishing law granted small fishermen exclusive rights for the fishing of sardines and some other seafood and for all fishing in lakes and rivers inland. The measure set guidelines for financial assistance to these exploited producers—above all, credits for fishermen's cooperatives—so they could have a living income. It also imposed higher taxes on capitalist fishing companies and standards that could improve conditions for workers on the industrial fishing boats.

Implementation of the 2001 law is still lagging behind, Blanca said, but they have made some progress toward getting fishermen's cooperatives set up, which is the only way to get government help. Blanca showed *Militant* reporters the papers he and five other fishermen had filed for the "Rafucho" co-op and said he expected final approval by government authorities by the end of the year. In the absence of co-ops being set up, all credits stipulated under the new law to aid independent fishermen in the state of Sucre have been channeled to the local branch of the National Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture (INAPESCA) set up to implement the 2001 fishing law. Locally, INAPESCA is run by opposition forces, Blanca said. "They have used 8 million bolivars [$5,000] from such credits to set up a fish farm in the area," he said, "which has been a waste, and is now overwhelmingly opposed by the fishermen. The credits due must be put under the control of the independent producers."

The fish farm employs very few people and the yields are low compared to what even independent fishermen catch with their small boats in the sea, where salt-water fish are found in ample supply, Blanca said.

In a few states, INAPESCA has already disbursed credits to fishermen. In a joint project with the Corporation for the Recovery of the state of Vargas, for example, INAPESCA granted credits of 300 million bolivars ($187,000) August 13 to fishermen in the town of La Guaira in that state. Some 35 local fishermen were the first to benefit, and 60 more will get credits by the end of the year. Fishermen in Vargas were given priority, according to various reports in the Venezuelan press, because devastating storms in 1999 caused most to lose their boats and fishing gear. INAPESCA president Daniel Francisco Novoa Rafallí said that artisan fishermen catch 70 percent of the fish consumed in the local market.

Other fishermen interviewed at Cumaná said one of the biggest political challenges is convincing most of the local fishermen to band together in co-ops. Government authorities have ignored their demands for decades, and many of the things promised in the new fishing law have not been implemented for two years now, so it is difficult to persuade fishermen this won't be another wasted effort. Only the example of one or two working cooperatives that Blanca and others say they are close to setting up can help make progress, we were told.

Struggle over bottom trawling

Blanca, Bermúdez, and Marco Motonari—a fisherman in San Carlos here who now works part time as a salesman in the local market—described a new challenge fishermen have faced since early this year; piracy on the high seas. Armed men in boats painted black stop the fishermen while at work, threaten to shoot them, and rob them of their motors and their catch. Blanca said he thinks these are thugs organized by the large commercial companies to demoralize independent fishermen from pushing for their rights under the 2001 law.

"It may also be retaliation for actions by small fishermen to stop *pesca de arrastre* [bottom trawling] by the large commercial firms where they scrape the ocean floor and destroy the environment," Blanca said.

"We have been fighting against this kind of fishing for 12 years," said Francisco Roque, a fisherman for 50 years. "We had a confrontation along this coast with one of these companies."

In June, Blanca and others said, a number of fishermen burned three industrial boats docked in Cumaná. Their owners had refused to stop bottom trawling. "Special nets are thrown to the bottom of the sea and brought up in a way that scoops up everything, including coral, on the seabed," Blanca said. Under the 2001 law, this practice is prohibited near the coast, but a number of large companies are doing it anyway. The fishermen's groups are now pushing to ban this practice altogether and for the imposition of severe penalties against violators, up to expropriation of the company.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

From right: Yarisa and Estebán Blanca, and their children Ivette and David in Cumaná, Venezuela, September 30.

Blanca is a local leader of the National Organization of Artisan Fishermen (ONPA). This is the new name of the National Bolivarian Command of Artisan Fishermen that Blanca belonged to when *Militant* reporters met him for the first time in July 2002. ONPA has largely replaced the old union of fishermen in the leadership of some 40,000 working fishermen nationwide. The latter group is controlled by the social democratic Democratic Action party, which alternated with COPEI, a smaller Social Christian party, in the federal government for decades until Chávez was elected president in 1998.

One of ONPA's aims is to convince local authorities to ease up on requiring permits for small fishermen until credits and other measures are put in place that allow them to have a living income, Blanca said, or to waive the fees and give licenses to independent fishermen for free.

Tussles with National Guard

Francisco Roque described this challenge more concretely. "We've had many problems recently with the National Guard because they demand we get permits before we go out to the sea," he said. "But how can we do that when it costs 200,000 bolivars [$125] to get the papers? If you don't have a permit they can give you a fine or requisition your boat. For many of us here, we have no option but to go out without the license. The other day I had an incident with a guard who came to bother me. I had to slap him on the chest so he would leave me alone. They don't let us work in peace."

Roque said he is lucky if he makes 100,000 bolivars a month. Despite these problems, he added, he remains a Chavista and is convinced that with more actions by fishermen, peasants, and other working people the government will find the wherewithal to "do the right thing."

The campaign to eliminate illiteracy, which is as high as 80 percent in the fishing communities, is one such example (see "Venezuelans carry out literacy campaign with aid and volunteer trainers from Cuba" in last week's *Militant*).

Roque, Blanca, and others pointed to the popular markets as another example. The government launched these markets in the middle of the bosses' "strike" last December-January, which was aimed at undermining Chávez. They are run by the army. Basic food items there are for sale at half the price of the regular stores. Chicken, for example, is sold at 1,750 bolivars per kilo, compared to nearly 3,000 on the regular market—much of it imported by the Venezuelan government from Brazil. Price differences are similar for cooking oil, rice, pasta, or powdered milk. Under popular demand, these markets were maintained and expanded throughout the country after the employers' lockout ended in February.

"A number of local chicken merchants said last week they'll go on strike because business has plummeted," said Tomás Blanca. "Many more of us go to the popular market now. Let them do that. They'll be out on their own."

We confirmed this during a visit to the market with Estebán Blanca, Tomas's brother who works on industrial fishing boats here. "Without this measure, most of us wouldn't have been able to survive," Estebán Blanca said. Prices of most food items have nearly tripled since last year.

Estebán Blanca and his wife, Yarisa, who works at a nearby hospital, spent a good part of the day with us. Estebán had just quit his job at an industrial fishing company because they refused to give him an advance of 30,000 bolivars (about $20) to buy school supplies for his two kids.

In discussions with Estebán Blanca, his neighbor Carlos Jiménez who also works on industrial ships, and Eladio Porras, president of the *marineros* union—which organizes the crews at industrial fishing companies—we got a good picture of what these workers face.

Workers on industrial fishing boats

"The company pays us 530,000 bolivars per trip," Estebán Blanca said. "A trip lasts 45 days at sea. After that we get a month of 'rest,' without pay. That means we make 7,000 bolivars per day—below the minimum wage. And when the fish doesn't bite, they pay us less or close to nothing because we get paid by the total tonnage of the catch. Unless you get sick on the boat or have an accident at work, there is no medical coverage of any kind. To make things worse, if the police find drugs on board, they take us all to jail even though we have no idea what's on the boat when we get in."

These companies don't recognize the union and "anyone who shows respect for the union is fired," Blanca said. "They don't respect the new law on fishing either. Chávez can't change this on his own."

Almost all the 1,200 workers on industrial boats belong to the marineros union, Porras said. "We on the crews signed a collective agreement in May 1990 with 53 large companies across Venezuela," he stated. Most of these firms are owned by Italian and Spanish capitalists. But the owners have since refused to abide by any of the provisions of the contract or to recognize the union. "They are supposedly obligated to turn over 16 percent of their profits over a year to the workers, but they never do that," he said. Porras reiterated that any worker who gives any indication that he is favorable to the union is fired.

The marineros union is now fighting to convince the government to give these workers credit to form a cooperative that would start with one industrial boat and a processing plant, employing 380 workers to begin with, Porras said. "We are convinced we'll be able to sell fish more cheaply on the market and improve wages and working conditions for the workers," he stated.

Porras also described how the large industrial fishing companies siphon off wealth from the country. These companies fill up their boats with as much as 1.5 million liters of fuel, which they buy at 38 bolivars per liter. This is 10 bolivars cheaper per liter than the price of gasoline in Venezuela—the world's fifth-largest oil producer. This is a subsidy the capitalist fishing firms got for signing the contract with the union. But they have continued to get it, even though they have in fact torn up the contract. Fuel prices are 10 times higher in other countries, Porras said. Workers know that a large boat consumes only about a third of this fuel on each trip, but they come back to fill up for the same amount again—evidence that the owners sell most of the fuel on the black market and profit handsomely.

Estebán Blanca and Carlos Jiménez said that until the virtual monopoly on fishing by these capitalist firms is dealt with by government action, independent fishermen and workers like them don't see a solution to their plight. One positive step in the fight for that, we were told, has been the banding together of independent fishermen and the workers on the industrial boats into a nationwide federation now being formed.

"The great majority of the poor are with Chávez," Blanca said. "The rich and the middle class are against him. They own most of the media and they keep pushing against us. They want to get rid of Chávez by force, but we won't let them."

Rosa Luxemburg on reform or revolution

Printed below are excerpts from the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters to *Reform or Revolution* by Rosa Luxemburg, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in November. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. The excerpts are reprinted by permission.

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BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Reform or Revolution was Rosa Luxemburg's first major political work, and one of her most enduring. She herself rightly considered it the work by which she would earn her political spurs in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and force the "old guard" to take her seriously as a political leader—despite the fact she was still in her twenties, a foreigner, and a woman.

Rosa left Switzerland, where she had recently completed her doctorate, and moved to Berlin in May 1898. Immediately she became embroiled in the growing battle over revisionism in the SPD.

During 1897–98, Eduard Bernstein published a series of articles in *Neue Zeit*, the theoretical organ of the SPD, in which he attempted to refute the basic tenets of scientific socialism, particularly the Marxist assertion that capitalism contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction, that it cannot maintain itself forever. He denied the materialist conception of history, the growing acuteness of capitalist contradictions, and the theory of class struggle. He concluded that revolution was not necessary, that socialism could be achieved by gradual reform of the capitalist system, through mechanisms like consumers' cooperatives, trade unions, and the gradual extension of political democracy. The SPD, he asserted, should be transformed from a party of social revolution into a party of social reforms. These ideas were further elaborated in his book, published in English under the title *Evolutionary Socialism*.

When Bernstein's articles began appearing, the leadership of the SPD did not take the controversy seriously. Bernstein was a close friend of the entire leadership of the party—August Bebel, Karl Kautsky, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Ignaz Auer, and others. He was one of the literary executors of Engels's estate, and a former editor of one of the SPD papers. Kautsky, the editor of *Neue Zeit*, thought highly of the articles and accepted them for publication....

Rosa Luxemburg, revolutionary leader and author of *Reform or Revolution*, in Berlin, 1914.

Although he denied it vociferously, Bernstein's writings were the first attempt to provide a systematic theoretical justification for those currents within the SPD which had in practice rejected revolutionary Marxism, the program on which the party stood. But he was certainly not an isolated individual. He had strong supporters among socialist intellectuals, trade union leaders and the South Germans.

The position held by the South Germans within the SPD was particularly significant. The SPD itself was formed in 1875 and outlawed by the government in 1878. Despite its illegal status it continued to grow rapidly and when the antisocialist laws were repealed in 1890, the party emerged as an important, legal, political force with a significant representation in the federal Reichstag and various provincial legislatures. Under its leadership a powerful trade union movement was built. In the International, the SPD was the unquestioned "great" party, the model looked up to by the whole International.

But the reformist current for which Bernstein became the theoretician began to develop early. During the prolonged period of European peace and relative prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century it found fertile soil in which to grow. One of its first overt manifestations was the policy of "South German exceptionalism."

The official SPD policy of "not a man nor a farthing for this system" was always translated into legislative action, on a federal level, by unconditional refusal to vote for any budgets which would tax the workers and peasants to sustain the tyranny of the German capitalist state, and maintain the courts, police and army of the rulers. But as early as 1891, SPD deputies in the provincial legislatures of Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, and Baden, pleading special conditions in southern Germany, voted for provincial budgets, arguing that since their vote was often decisive, they were thus able to use their political weight to force concessions and obtain a "better" budget to maintain capitalism. ….

It was such right-wing tendencies within the SPD, bent on reforming capitalism, that gave the strongest support to Bernstein's theories.

When Rosa Luxemburg arrived on the scene the battle had hardly begun. While the majority of the party executive did not agree with Bernstein, they acted as if they hoped the controversy would somehow disappear....

Rosa Luxemburg entered the battle by publishing the articles reproduced here….

The discussion continued within the party and Second International for a number of years. The SPD executive at first encouraged a theoretical discussion, maintaining an ambivalent position, but the practical implications of Bernstein's abandonment of a revolutionary perspective could not be ignored for long. One by one most of the major German and International leaders entered the battle against revisionism. The debate spread throughout the entire International.

At the party Congresses of 1901 and 1903, and at the International Congress of 1904, resolutions condemning the theoretical basis of revisionism were adopted. However, Bernstein, Volimar and the other proponents of revisionism remained securely within the SPD; and the extent to which the defeat of revisionism remained a hollow victory, even at that early date, was indicated by the fact that Bernstein, who had not altered his views, himself voted for the resolutions condemning revisionism.

As Ignaz Auer, SPD secretary, wrote to Bernstein in 1899, "My dear Ede, one does not formally make a decision to do the things you suggest, one doesn't *say* such things, one simply does them."

Auer's formula was unwittingly followed by the majority of the SPD, as was demonstrated fifteen years later for all the world to see when the party formally voted to support its own imperialist government in World War I, a betrayal of the most elementary principles of proletarian internationalism and revolutionary Marxism.

As Rosa Luxemburg pointed out, the Bernstein controversy posed the question of "the very existence of the social democratic movement."

That she was among the first to realize this and sound the alarm would be sufficient to place Rosa Luxemburg in the revolutionary hall of fame, even if she had done nothing more of importance for the rest of her life.

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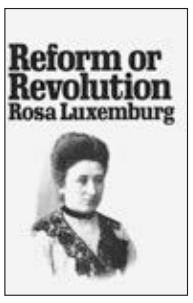

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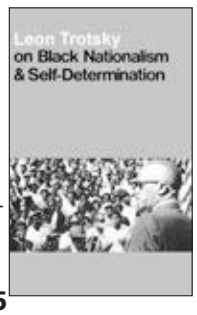

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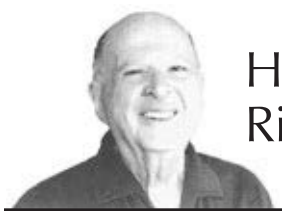
— GREAT SOCIETY

Those were belly laughs, not a quake—In a mission to China, U.S. secretary of commerce Donald Evans delivered a blunt speech against China's "abuse" of its fair trade agreement with the United State. He accused the Chinese of selling more than they were buying. "Free trade has to be a level playing field," he declared. "We will not tolerate a stacked deck."



Harry Ring

But don't get jumpy—"Wall Street shows signs that the rally may be fizzling"—Financial headline, *Los Angeles Times.*

Like f'rinstance—"WICHITA, Kansas—The economy continues to be a major problem in Wichita, the state's largest city. Officials say the number of people in the Wichita area whose unemployment benefits expired nearly doubled in the past year. Home foreclosures are also up more than ten percent in the past year, one researcher said."—*USA Today.*

Sounds oily—A lone Congress member has introduced a bill to give some recognition to what is described as a "dwindling" Osage Indian nation in Oklahoma. Four Osage members are currently recognized by the feds. All four are over 96. Meanwhile more than 20,000 Osage people have been declared by the U.S. government as not meeting its standards of Osage membership.

Welcome to civilization—Tory members of the United Kingdom Parliament introduced a bill to use a remote island to fetter those seeking asylum. If such an island is not readily available, they suggest anchoring a ship in an equally remote area.

'Nuthin's too good for our boys!—Some 650 GIs, sick or injured, and being readied to resume active duty, are being quartered in a Georgia training barracks. A congressional report found the patients were not getting proper medical care or facilities.

Bulldozers as weapons—Caterpillar failed to get a stop order on Disney's cartoon, "George of the Jungle 2." Caterpillar argued vainly that it was demeaning and damaging to use a cartoon likeness of a yellow bulldozer used by "an evil attacking army" out to raze George's jungle home.

Not a yellow submarine—The U.S. organization SUSTAIN, and others, try to curb murderous Israeli military aggression against the Palestinians. SUSTAIN condemns "the use of Caterpillar bulldozers in destroying roads, wiping out olive trees, and knocking down the homes of Palestinian people."

Cubans in Guinea-Bissau's independence struggle

Below are excerpts from *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa 1959–1976* by Piero Gleijeses. They are taken from the chapter titled, "Guerrillas in Guinea-Bissau," which traces Cuba's contribution in the trenches to the fight for independence of the Portuguese colony of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. A second installment will cover the role of Cuban medical personnel in that struggle.

Conflicting Missions is a compelling history of Cuban internationalist policy in Africa from 1959 to 1976 and its inevitable clash with Washington's course of deepening intervention to back colonial rule and reinforce imperialist domination. Gleijeses backs his presentation with a range of original sources, including government archives in Cuba, Europe, and the United States, as well as interviews with government officials and leaders of independence struggles in Africa. The book's extensive maps, illustrations, and notes make the material accessible to those unfamiliar with the period.

Gleijeses mentions a number of important figures in the passages below. They include Amílcar Cabral, the leader of the African Party of Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC); Fidel Castro, the most prominent leader of the Cuban Revolution and the country's president; Víctor Dreke, a cadre of Cuba's revolutionary movement, who had served under Che Guevara during Cuba's earlier internationalist mission to the Congo (Zaire); and Jorge Risquet, another leader of the Congo mission and present-day member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

From *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* by Piero Gleijeses. Copyright © 2002 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher and the author. http://www.uncpress.unc.edu

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BY PIERO GLEIJESES

It was Che Guevara's three-month trip to Africa in December 1964 that forged the link between the PAIGC and Havana. "While in Conakry," the Bissau newspaper *Nõ Pintcha* reported, "Che Guevara asked to meet our leaders, and he even delayed his departure from Guinea to see our secretary-general." On January 12, 1965, he met Amílcar Cabral.

In July a handful of Cape Verdeans who had been studying in Europe left Algiers for Havana aboard a Cuban ship to undergo military training. The PAIGC was also fighting for the independence of the Cape Verde Islands, some 430 miles west of Guinea-Bissau. It expected that the group of students, which would grow to thirty-one, would "then return home to start guerilla warfare in the Cape Verde Islands," and that several of their Cuban instructors would accompany them.

In January 1966, Cabral made his first trip to Cuba when he led the PAIGC delegation to the Tricontinental Conference in Havana. He was "the most impressive African in attendance," U.S. intelligence reported, and he made a powerful impression on his Cuban hosts.

After the speech, Cabral and Castro spoke at great length… "Amílcar explained the history of our independence struggle," wrote Luís Cabral, Amílcar's half brother and close aide. "Fidel became increasingly aware of … the problems we faced. When Amílcar spoke of our need for artillery, Fidel understood that we would also need instructors; when Amílcar spoke of life in the liberated regions … the Cuban leader understood that we had to have doctors. And he understood that our armed forces needed better transportation to be more effective: Cuba would send us both the vehicles and the men to teach our fighters how to drive and maintain them…." At the end of the conversation, "Fidel said to Amílcar, 'Come with me. I'll take you the Escambray [mountains]'" A car took them from Havana to Trinidad; from there they proceeded by jeep and, in some places on foot. The trip lasted three days….

Castro sent for Dreke, who since returning from Zaire, had headed the bureau that trained Cubans going on military missions abroad and foreigners coming to Cuba (the UM, or Military Unit, 1546). 'Fidel told me: "You have to take charge of the military mission in Guinea.'" He also told Dreke to take some of the men who had been with him in Zaire, "the best."

Dreke was a comandante, a member of the Central Committee, and a man who knew Africa and guerrilla warfare. Moreover, he inspired enormous confidence and respect.… The power of his example and his quiet charisma were evident when I interviewed Cubans who had served under him, thirty years earlier, in Zaire and Guinea-Bissau....

Portuguese general Arnaldo Schultz, who had arrived in Bissau in 1964 predicting "the war in Portuguese Guinea would be over in six months," was "sadly disillusioned" when he left four years later. A highly respected officer, General António de Spínola, replaced him as governor and commander in chief in May 1968….

The war dragged on, dashing Spínola's hopes and giving the PAIGC time to hone its skills. PAIGC training, guerilla tactics, and arms were "first class," a Portuguese colonel told a visiting South African journalist in April 1971. "There are times when I sincerely wish I had some of their young leaders with me in the field," he added. The PAIGC, a captain told the same journalist, "'was in a class of its own'… Their tenacity impressed the Portuguese captain. It frightened his men at times."

Cabral limited foreign participation in two ways. First, he turned only to the Cubans. Throughout the war, they were the only foreigners who fought in Guinea-Bissau. Second, he limited their number to the minimum…. On average, there were only 50 to 60 Cubans assigned to the MMCG [Cuban Military Mission in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau].

And yet, despite their small numbers, their military contribution was, as President Nino said, "of the utmost importance." There was, first of all, "the boost to our morale," a PAIGC commander remarked. "Here were men who had crossed the ocean to come to our aid; they lived with us; they shared in our sacrifices." The Cubans, said another, "were brave; they endured everything, they ate what we ate; we did everything together."

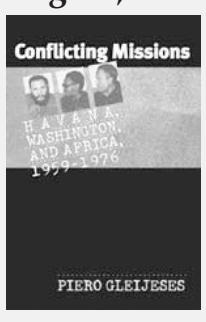
The Cubans were also the specialists in laying land mines and using sophisticated infantry weapons that the PAIGC was receiving from the Soviet Union. "This was very important," a PAIGC commander remarked. "They trained us on the spot. We called our first bazookas 'Cubans.' They were made in the United States, but it was the Cubans who gave them to us and taught us how to use them."

Amílcar Cabral, leader of the African Party for Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, speaks at Cuban military camp in Congo Brazzaville in August 1966. "Our forefathers who were taken to be slaves are rejoicing today to see their children reunited and working together to help us be independent and free," Cabral said.

***Conflicting Missions:* Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976**

By Piero Gleijeses

Documents Cuba's role in aiding the African national liberation struggles, from Algeria to Angola. *$24.95*



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THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

November 17, 1978

The appointment of a military government in Iran November 6 has set the stage for a showdown between the tyrannical regime of shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and an aroused people.

"The military government is about the last card the shah has to play," one U.S. official told *Washington Post* reporter Jim Hoagland. "He doesn't know what to do next, and neither do we. It will be a miracle if he is still around to hold the elections he has promised."

Such doubts about the shah's future are certainly warranted by the situation in Iran. "Despite official denials," *Washington Post* correspondent William Claiborne reported November 4, "Iranian Finance Ministry officials concede privately that labor unrest permeated the country's entire industrial base."

Describing the atmosphere in the country, Claiborne noted that in the Finance Ministry itself, about half the employees were on strike and that demonstrators in the ministry headquarters had been "running up and down the corridors, shouting 'Death to the Shah.'"

The strike by oil workers in particular, which has cut off petroleum exports valued at $21 billion a year—60 percent of the country's gross national product—has the shah's regime by the throat.

The oil workers, like other strikers, are raising political demands, not simply economic ones. Among them are an end to martial law, release of all political prisoners, punishment of the perpetrators of massacres carried out by the regime, and the dissolution of "security offices" maintained by the secret police in workplaces.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

November 16, 1953

The East German workers uprising last June against the Stalinist rulers continues to reverberate around the world. This magnificent struggle stands like a gigantic beacon of hope for the oppressed masses everywhere. It defies all attempts to cover it with mud and frame-up lies. The Stalinists have done everything in their power to represent the East German workers as "tools of capitalism," and "fascist agents." But they have failed, and failed dismally.

The Socialist Party of India published a resolution, "We Salute the Workers of Eastern Europe" in the September issue of their paper, *Socialist Appeal*. In answer to the Stalinist lies about the Eastern German workers, they say:

"The allegation that the general strike of these workers is an act of imperialist provocation is not the first slander against the working class that has come out of present-day Russia, nor will it be the last. The Socialist Party rejects the suggestion that mass movements of any considerable significance can be the work of provocateurs and spies. There would be some sense in these allegations if we were dealing with individual terrorist acts.

"Where, however, workers risk their lives against a tyrannical regime, fight with their traditional class weapon of the general strike and pay for their courageousness with hundreds of executions and thousands of arrests and imprisonments, to say that they have been the victims of agents and provocateurs representing the class enemy only shows that those who make these allegations possess neither understanding nor loyalty to the working class.

EDITORIAL

War party on the ascent

October was the best month for Washington's "war on terrorism" since the U.S. military victory in Baghdad last spring.

At the beginning of November, U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld and president George Bush showed they are bent on capitalizing on last month's gains to push forward the grinding march to hegemony of the war party in the United States. That's what was behind the November 2 lengthy appearances by Rumsfeld on all the major Sunday morning TV shows and Bush's speech in Alabama the next day.

October brought the vote by the United Nations Security Council that codified the existing fact—the "soft" U.S. protectorate in Iraq. The stunning unanimous character of that vote—including the government of Syria—showed the effectiveness and partial legitimization of Tel Aviv's bombing on the outskirts of Damascus just 12 days earlier. The same month Tokyo pledged to Washington not only substantial financial backing but additional troops for Iraq's occupation. NATO also launched its rapid reaction force, capable of being deployed anywhere in the world within five days, less than a week after the imperialist military alliance's ministerial war-game meeting in Colorado Springs.

We then witnessed the bending to the administration's course in Iraq, however grudgingly, by opinion columnists from liberals in the *New York Times* to the rightist Patrick Buchanan. Their common argument is "'We' are there, so what should 'we' do?" Thinking as "we Americans" is among the most effective bourgeois myths imposed on workers to prevent us from developing class-consciousness—of identifying "we" as a class with common interests with all those toiling for a living around the world, and "they" as the capitalists, our exploiters, who have antagonistic and irreconcilable interests with the workers.

October's string of victories for the warmakers was capped off by the bipartisan adoption in both houses of Congress of an $87 billion appropriation for the occupation and rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan, and with the "donors" conference in Madrid that drew dozens of governments around the world to emulate Tokyo's subservient example, even though with lesser funds.

All this shows the impotence of any "left" imperialist opposition to the "global war on terrorism" as a successful strategy to derail the Bush administration and its allies.

No matter how loudly liberals argue that the Bush administration "bungled the occupation of Iraq," Rumsfeld and his deputy Wolfowitz continue to make propaganda gains. There is no reason to believe that bourgeois public opinion in the United States has turned against Bush's course in the "war on terrorism" today. To the contrary.

The war party in the last dominant imperialist power on earth continues its slow ascent.

The U.S. ruling class is implementing its strategy to deal with a world where they do not have Stalinist powers—like those in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—to use to keep the toilers and various bourgeois regimes in the semicolonial world in check through the farce of "peaceful co-existence" promoted by the Stalinists.

Decades of Stalinist counterrevolutionary activity in the Middle East and elsewhere directed from Moscow has created a void that bourgeois nationalist formations like Hezbollah and Hamas fill today—organizations that have nothing in common with the popular liberation movements that marked an earlier period.

Years of Stalinist betrayals in Iraq helped pave the way for the Baathist Party government of Saddam Hussein to come to power, which resulted in crushing blows against the working class in that country.

Revolutionists in Iraq today would fight for Iraqi sovereignty, which the U.S. armed forces prevent. At the same time, they would be opposed to the return of the Baathist regime. They would use whatever civic space exists to build and consolidate a revolutionary organization that could lead working people there down the road to get rid of the U.S. troops and keep the United Nations out as well.

The analogies drawn in the big-business media between Iraq today and Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s are worthless. The U.S. troops occupying Iraq are fighting the remnants of this Baathist regime, not a popular guerrilla force like the National Liberation Front of Vietnam that earned that popularity through a decades-long fight against French and then U.S. imperialism.

The late arrival of the U.S. military in the Balkans following the Dayton Agreement in 1995 registered in practice that the imperialist powers in the European Union would not be a military and police force in Europe or anywhere else in any meaningful sense. The road from Dayton to Colorado Springs took eight years. But a U.S.-dominated, globally oriented new-NATO, light on its feet and bypassing extensive parliamentary debate before its deployment, is at the same time the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist armed forces throughout Europe.

Former U.S. president William Clinton tried to deal with U.S. imperialism's problems by launching cruise missiles against Afghanistan and Iraq. No serious person in the ruling class believes that was more effective than what Washington is doing today. It is clearer now what it means for the U.S. rulers to have to organize, without the Stalinists' help, to be the dominant world power.

The war on Iraq is the strongest and clearest example yet of this reality. Iraq and Afghanistan were easy targets for U.S. imperialism because of the unpopularity of the Baathist and Taliban regimes. Washington is now pressing against similarly unpopular regimes in Iran and Syria. And it may score more victories down the road.

U.S. imperialism faces two serious obstacles as it tries to advance along this course.

First, the world is marked by a tendency toward financial collapse. World capitalism's inevitably deepening depression conditions are Washington's undefeatable enemy. This economic disaster generates resistance to its effects among the toilers—over time, but just as inevitably. This is the second obstacle in Washington's path. The U.S. rulers have not been able to knock the working class and the trade unions off the center stage of politics. Workers' resistance to the bosses' offensive will bring reinforcements to those fighting the employers, make possible the stripping away of illusions, and increase class solidarity and political consciousness as the consequences of the mounting social catastrophe unfold.

Facing and internalizing this reality today is necessary for presenting a program and following a course that advance the line of march of the working class towards taking power out of the hands of the warmakers—of the conservative or liberal varieties—and joining the struggle to build a society based on human solidarity, a socialist society.

U.S. gov't: Tehran harbors 'terrorists'

Continued from front page

ton would make the governments of Iran and Syria pay for "interfering" in Iraq with "the influx of foreign terrorists." Rumsfeld responded: "We've let them know that we're notably unhappy about the fact that terrorists come across their borders into Iraq and further complicate the problem."

He added: "We know in some instances they have condoned it…. Take the terrorist organization Ansar al-Islam. It was in Iraq. Saddam Hussein knew it was in Iraq. It was functioning. It left when we invaded Iraq, went to Iran, found a hospitable environment, apparently, and now has returned to Iraq…. It would have been better if they had not found a hospitable environment in Iran."

These comments are part of a campaign by Washington to blame the governments of Iran and Syria for aiding "terrorists" supposedly coming into Iraq from these countries to attack U.S. troops.

The statements came shortly after testimony prepared for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, which was made public here October 28. Armitage said the White House was prepared to resume limited contacts with Tehran but relations would not improve until the Iranian government shared intelligence on al Qaeda.

Tehran announced next day it would not share intelligence with Washington or turn over or identify al Qaeda members the White House has charged that the Iranian government is harboring. "We don't have relations with American security services so there is no reason to do anything on this issue," said Abdollah Ramazanzadeh, a Tehran spokesman. To the contrary, he added, Tehran was waiting for Washington to take "practical steps" to improve relations. "It is not possible to threaten a country, to block its assets, to accuse it and then want talks," he said. He reiterated Tehran's demand that Washington release Iranian assets it froze after the 1979 revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed shah.

In his 2002 State of the Union address, U.S. president George Bush grouped Iran with Iraq and north Korea as part of an "axis of evil." Since then, Washington has led an international campaign to brand Iran in violation of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and to stop Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

U.S. and Iranian government officials held several meetings in Geneva before and after the U.S.-led war against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. Washington ended the talks following the bombing of a residential compound in Saudi Arabia on May 12 in which 35 people were killed, including nine from the United States. The Bush administration has charged that the bombings were planned by al Qaeda members who are now in Iran. Tehran has maintained that these al Qaeda members it holds in custody could not have been involved in that attack because they were detained beforehand.

Washington had demanded that Iran identify and turn over al Qaeda members within its borders. In October Tehran identified 225 such suspects it said had been extradited to their countries of origin. In supplying the names to the UN Security Council, Iranian diplomats emphasized that Tehran had been a long-time opponent of the Taliban government in Afghanistan and of al Qaeda.

An Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson, according to the BBC, said al Qaeda members in custody had committed offenses in Iran and would be tried in Iranian courts. Among those Washington has charged that Iran is harboring are three of the group's supposed top leaders, including Osama bin Laden's son Saad.

Bush, Rumsfeld

Continued from front page

are necessary. They are part of a war that's difficult and complicated."

During a number of lengthy interviews that morning, Rumsfeld said that U.S. officers are making progress in stabilizing the occupation, and have no plans to bolster the number of U.S. troops. Rather, he said, tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and police, who function under U.S. command, are shouldering more of the "security" burden.

In a speech the next day to employees of Craneworks, a small business in Birmingham, Alabama, U.S. president George Bush spoke along similar lines, without even mentioning the downing of the U.S. helicopter in Fallujah. "We will win the war on terror, there's no doubt in my mind. We will not rest, we will not tire," Bush said. "The terrorists and the killers and those who harbor terrorists cannot stand the thought of a free society in their midst. That's why the mission in Iraq is vital…. We'll defeat the terrorists there so we don't have to face them on our own streets.

"The enemy in Iraq believes America will run, that's why they're willing to kill innocent civilians, relief workers, coalition troops," he said. "America will never run. America will do what is necessary to make our country more secure."

Attacks on the U.S.-led forces run as high as two or three dozen a day, said Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the top U.S. military commander in Iraq. While Iraqi civilians have been the worst hit, casualties among U.S. soldiers have mounted. Since May 1, when Bush declared combat operations over, the death toll among U.S. forces has risen to 238—nearly double the 139 killed during the invasion. There are no official estimates for the number of Iraqi dead or wounded.

Rumsfeld, Bush, and other officials have aggressively defended their administration's course after scoring several victories over their international and domestic critics last month. These included the October 16 unanimous vote of the United Nations Security Council legitimizing the U.S.-run regime in Iraq, and Congress's approval down to the last penny of the $87 billion requested by Bush to fund the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The debate continues in ruling-class circles, however, even as those who argue that Iraq has become a quagmire have suffered political blows. The *New York Times*, a consistent voice of the liberal opposition, carried a feature article in its November 2 Sunday magazine entitled "Blueprint for a Mess: How the Bush administration's prewar planners bungled postwar Iraq."

The paper's conservative columnist, William Safire, expressed a different view the next day. "The coalition is clearly winning on two of the three war fronts," he wrote. "The people of Iraq's Shiite south and Kurdish north—80 percent of the population of 23 million—are making substantial progress toward reconstruction and self-governance. But the battle within the Sunni triangle around Baghdad—where Saddam's rapacious sons and secret police long victimized other Iraqis—is not yet won."

On November 2, Democratic senator Joseph Biden called for more troops to be sent to Iraq while a local army and police force is trained, even if such a step proved "very, very unpopular" in the United States. He added, "We have to be prepared to go back to our European friends and say, 'We need more help. We're willing to give you more say in the formation of this government.'"

Responding to such arguments, Rumsfeld told NBC that in recent months occupying forces have trained up to 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and police. He cited the deaths of 85 of them as evidence of their participation in patrols. In addition, he said, London and other governments have maintained a stable number of 30,000 troops. These two developments have enabled the Pentagon to reduce its forces from 150,000 to 130,000, he said.

Bush and Rumsfeld both said that the attacks on U.S. forces are carried out primarily by remnants of the brutal Baath Party dictatorship of Saddam Hussein who are active in the "triangle" between Baghdad and areas north of the Iraqi capital, but have little influence elsewhere. They have also accused Iran and Syria of letting "foreign terrorists" enter Iraq through their territory.

British and French government officials have backed Bush's claims that "foreigners" are part of the attacks. According to the *New York Times*, French investigative judge Louis Bruguière said "dozens of poor and middle-class Muslim men had left France for Iraq since the summer."

Meanwhile, French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said he opposed pulling out of Iraq now after a meeting of foreign ministers from Europe and Africa. De Villepin, who had argued against the U.S.-UK invasion as a spokesman for French imperialism, said, "Obviously a pullout from Iraq today would be catastrophic and would absolutely not correspond to the demands of the situation."

In debates in the UN Security Council during the buildup to the war, De Villepin had argued that UN inspections and sanctions should be used instead of an invasion.

According to former Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz, who surrendered to U.S. troops April 24, Paris's stance contributed to convincing Hussein that the imperialist invasion plans would not come to fruition. The November 3 *Washington Post* reported that Aziz told U.S. interrogators that representatives of both Paris and Moscow had told the Iraqi ruler they would use their veto power in the UN Security Council to block approval for an invasion.

"According to Aziz," the *Post* said, "Hussein concluded after private talks with French and Russian contacts that the United States would probably wage a long air war first…. By hunkering down and putting up a stiff defense, he might buy enough time to win a cease-fire brokered by Paris and Moscow."

Cannon: how the 'Militant' got its name

November 15 marks the 75th anniversary of the first issue of the *Militant*, which has been published uninterruptedly since 1928. *Militant* distributors around the world are planning public events around that date to celebrate this occasion.

The *Militant* launched this column two weeks ago as part of preparing for these 75th anniversary celebrations. The first two installments consisted of major excerpts from "A Short History of the *Militant"* by Joseph Hansen, a long-time Socialist Workers Party leader and *Militant* editor at various times. This week, we feature an interview with James P. Cannon published in the Nov. 10, 1978, *Militant* to mark the paper's 50th year.

Accompanying the two-page spread of the interview was a list of 50th anniversary rallies planned for 30 cities. Featured speakers included *Militant* editor Mary-Alice Waters; staff writers Harry Ring—the author of the article below—Omari Musa, and Andy Rose; and other SWP leaders at the time such as Jack Barnes, John Hawkins, Linda Jenness, Andrew Pulley, and Olga Rodríguez.

Twenty-five years later, similar events are being organized. Speakers' panels will include workers, farmers, and youth who have joined *Militant* distributors in various social struggles over the years and who have read and appreciate the newspaper. They will also feature a speaker who can explain the history of the *Militant* and its place in building an international communist movement, yesterday and today.

The *Militant* urges all its distributors to send us information on these meetings by Monday, November 10, so they can be listed on this page in the next issue.

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BY HARRY RING

James P. Cannon, the founding leader of the American Trotskyist movement, was also the founding editor of the *Militant*.

In the fall of 1973, less than a year before he died, I interviewed Cannon about the early years of the *Militant*. We were both living in Los Angeles at the time, and I did a series of oral history interviews with him so that added information about him would be available for future reference.

As Cannon filled in details and added recollections about the initial years of the *Militant*, one thing became clear. The founders of American Trotskyism had fully absorbed Lenin's concept of the role of a newspaper in building a revolutionary party.

Lenin saw the development of an effective newspaper as key to the building of a party. The press, he emphasized, is the collective organizer of the party.

When the Trotskyists were expelled from the Communist Party fifty years ago, the first thing they did was publish a paper.

The story has been told many times. "Three generals without an army." Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Martin Abern were expelled by the Communist Party's central committee for their adherence to Leon Trotsky's "Russian Opposition."

The three found themselves outside the party with literally a handful of supporters. Yet within a week of their expulsion, they were on the street with a paper, the *Militant*.

It wasn't easy.

"We didn't have any money to start with," Cannon explained. "We didn't even have a mimeograph machine."

Moreover, the new paper and movement were being launched not on the basis of an advance for the movement but a setback.

The original Communist Party press, Cannon recalled, had been founded under the inspiration of the victory of the Russian revolution of 1917.

But in 1928, "we didn't start with a victory," Cannon explained. "We started with a terrible defeat—with the exile of Trotsky, first to Alma-Ata then to Turkey, and our own expulsion and isolation."

It wasn't a passively accepted isolation. The small band of Trotskyists were determined to reach the ranks of the Communist Party with their ideas. The bureaucratic hacks who controlled the CP were equally determined that this should not happen. They regularly dispatched goon squads against the Trotskyists, and their paper.

For the Trotskyists, the semimonthly *Militant* was a crucial weapon.

"The whole movement centered around the *Militant*," Cannon said. "We didn't have enough people to make a demonstration.

"When we decided to challenge the Stalinist hooligans and to sell our paper right in front of the cafeteria, which they operated in Union Square, Abern, Shachtman and I had to go do it, take the papers and try to sell there."

He emphasized the point a half dozen times.

'Our weapon'

"It was our weapon.

"Everything we had was concentrated around the *Militant*. Just the physical process of getting out the *Militant* and finding the money somewhere to pay for it—that was the biweekly achievement.

"The paper is the voice of the movement. Without a paper, how are you going to build a movement?"

How did the *Militant* get its name?

It was Cannon's proposal and the idea stemmed from his relationship with Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

Militant

James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He had been among the leaders of the Communist Party who opposed the Stalinist course of the CP leadership. After their undemocratic expulsion from the CP, Cannon and his comrades established the *Militant*, publishing the first issue on Nov. 15, 1928. He was the paper's founding editor.

Cannon had been the national secretary of International Labor Defense, a nonpartisan committee initiated by the Communist Party in the mid-1920s to defend political prisoners.

Defense of Sacco and Vanzetti, the victimized anarchists, was a major activity of the ILD. Cannon visited Sacco and Vanzetti in prison several times.

He recalled a visit with Vanzetti that stayed particularly in his memory.

"We had a long talk," he said. "Vanzetti was talking about a third member of their group who had jumped, or was pushed, out of a ten-story building when the government agents had him prisoner and were examining him.

"I remember Vanzetti saying, 'He wouldn't have jumped. He was a good militant.'

"In the old radical movement," Cannon explained, "that was an ordinary expression. That's what you say about a person who's active and giving all they've got to the movement.

"I proposed this name to designate what we were, and it was accepted."

Cannon took particular pride in the fact that the *Militant* was internationalist from the outset and that it played an important role in building the world Trotskyist movement.

Moreover, the *Militant* was the exiled Trotsky's principal voice. With its few meager pages, it managed to publish an entire series of major articles by Trotsky analyzing key Soviet and world developments.

And despite the difficulties and pressures members of the movement persisted in their stubborn efforts to get the paper out. They sold it to each individual they could reach and, whenever they obtained names, mailed copies abroad.

It was an extraordinarily difficult process, but it brought results.

Cannon told a story illustrating what a single copy of the paper can accomplish.

A single copy ...

A copy of the first issue was received in South Africa by a radical journalist, Frank Graves. Graves was convinced by that first *Militant* and became a Trotskyist.

Shortly after, Graves went to China as a reporter. There he played an important role in helping establish the Chinese Trotskyist organization.

During this same period, Graves also won another journalist to Trotskyism. This was Harold Isaacs, then China correspondent for Havas, predecessor of Agence France Presse.

Isaacs remained with the movement less than decade, but made two important contributions.

He authored a major book, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, which detailed how Stalin's false policies led to the bloody defeat of the 1925–27 Chinese revolution.

And he played an important role in relation to the *Militant*. After several years in China, Isaacs was reassigned to New York. There, Cannon said, he contributed his journalistic skill to help train a *Militant* staff.

At the outset, Cannon and Shachtman were the only experienced writers in the new movement. But with the aid of Isaacs, they were able to train newer recruits to Trotskyism and, as Cannon put it "professionalize" the paper.

First fund drive

An early but not easily attained goal was to establish the *Militant* as a weekly.

At the founding convention of the new organization, held in Chicago in May 1929, a special fund was launched for this purpose. The tiny organization set out to raise $1,000.

They acquired a battered old linotype machine and an even older press. In November 1929—a few weeks after the stock market crash—they began weekly publication.

As Cannon recalled that experience, you could see him relive it.

"We started out with high hopes with this thousand-dollar fund," he said. "But we never made it. It was just too much money for the comrades. We overreached ourselves."

In July of 1930, they retreated back to a semi-monthly. But they persisted and finally, in 1931, established the weekly *Militant*.

"The paper became quite professional," Cannon said. "Gradually—and sometimes by leaps—it became a recognized journal in the radical movement.

"It was never regarded as a throwaway sheet of a sect. It was known as a paper with a point of view and a method of approaching things."

I think Cannon would be pleased that on the *Militant's* fiftieth anniversary, it's still known that way.

LETTERS

Imperialism and competition

In the October 20 *Militant*, Sam Manuel summarized the key points of Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. The first point in Sam's summary says that, as an aspect of the transition to the imperialist epoch, "the lawful workings of capitalism long ago transformed 'free competition'—a feature of capitalism in its infancy—into its opposite..." and now the big cartels divide the world's markets, decide what to produce, and fix prices. This summary left the impression that competition, having been turned into its opposite, must not be very important to capitalism today.

From reading the *Militant* and other communist writings, I long ago got the impression that competition in the context of private ownership of the means of production is the deepest force and the defining feature of capitalist exploitation—even in the imperialist epoch. Didn't Lenin say that imperialism doesn't resolve any of capitalism's contradictions, it just adds its own? It's my sense that the imperialists use their monopoly enterprises, their state power, their interimperialist pacts, and their superexplotation of the semicolonies to temporarily manage and defuse capitalism's crises. But it's the contradictions of "classical" competitive capitalism that still build up and explode in time—with even greater force and in more forms (including those mentioned in part 2 of Sam's article, in issue no. 36 of the *Militant*) than were imagined before imperialism.

Am I on the right track? If not, could you suggest something to read that might help me clear up my confusion about "competition then" vs. "competition now?"

Dave Segal
New York, New York

Third World revolution?

First and foremost may I thank and congratulate you all in what you do; I am 16 years old, and a college student in England, and am in regular contact with the Communist League in London. I go to the bookstore there as much as I can, and what you people do for the paper and the web site is just amazing. I am e-mailing to see what your views are on my idea about world history in the coming years.

As I see it, communist revolution must strike at the Third World first and foremost, because this is the West's new class for exploiting and although we are obviously exploited here, we are not as brutally exploited as the working class in the Third World, who would be more inclined and open-minded towards communist revolution. Then, once the West has lost influence there, by these countries following the Cuban example of nationalization, then the rulers will have no choice but to return to the old days of brutally exploiting the working class back at home, which is when revolution strikes here.

If you could comment at all to me about this, I would be hugely appreciative.

James Haywood
London, England

Young Socialists in Tucson

Ma'mud Shirvani spent a weekend in Tucson with the Young Socialists at the University of Arizona here. One hundred people came to hear Shirvani's lecture on "50 Years after the Coup in Iran: a history of imperialist intervention and Iranian resistance."

His talk was part of a weekly series of anti-imperialist films and lectures sponsored by Voices of Opposition to War, Racism and Oppression, a local coalition in which the Young Socialists are active. Two students signed up for the Young Socialist weekly Marxist class series. One of them appeared at our class on lessons of the Utah coal miners' strike.

Betsey Stone, Arrin Hawkins, and Bill Schmitt drove from Los Angeles to join the Young Socialists in a potluck for Ma'mud and to help at the weekly literature table on the campus. Twelve *Militants*, one subscription, and a couple of Pathfinder titles were sold.

Chris
Tucson, Arizona

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

THE MILITANT

Oscar López in need of medical care

Campaign presses for rights of Puerto Rican political prisoner denied treatment for 7 months

BY RÓGER CALERO

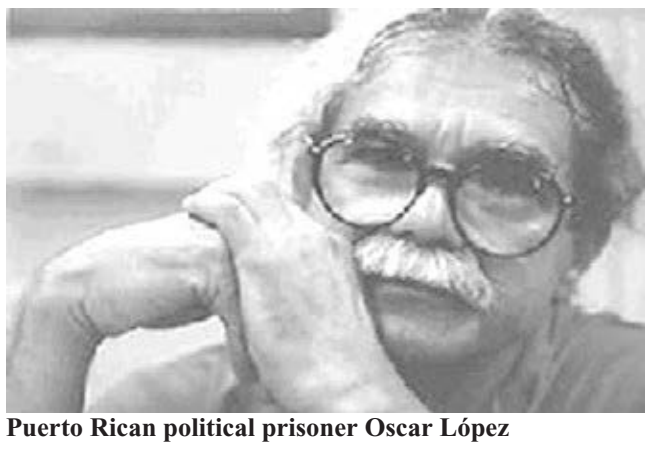
An international campaign is underway to demand medical treatment for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera, who has been in U.S. prison for 22 years.

López is serving a 70-year sentence at the maximum security federal prison at Terre Haute, Indiana. He has been denied medical treatment for bilateral hernias, diagnosed seven months ago by a prison surgeon, The doctor recommended surgery.

"We are asking that you send letters to the [U.S.] Bureau of Prisons demanding that he get the medical attention he needs," Margarita Mergal, a member of the Committee for Human Rights of Puerto Rico, told the *Militant*. "He is in bad health, and in a lot of pain."

The prison authorities have said that López has to wait for his turn to get medical attention. "But he has been waiting for his turn since March," Mergal said. "It's obvious that this is nothing more nor less than another way of punishing him."

López's deteriorating condition and increased levels of pain prevent him from exercising, something he was still able to do three months ago.



Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López

The independence fighter has been singled out for particularly brutal treatment during the two decades of his imprisonment. He spent 12 years in solitary confinement before an international campaign won his 1998 transfer to Terre Haute from the federal prison in Marion, Illinois, and release into the general prison population.

During that time he was subjected to sleep deprivation, intrusive body searches, and nearly complete lack of outdoor recreation.

He was jailed in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years on charges of "seditious conspiracy." U.S. officials claimed that he was a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation, a pro-independence organization accused by Washington of carrying out a series of bombings of government, business, and military sites.

Seven years later, López was framed for "conspiracy to escape" and sentenced to an additional 15 years. The Puerto Rican fighter is not eligible for release until 2027.

López's real crime in the eyes of the U.S. government was his involvement in the struggle against Washington's colonial domination of his country. Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States for more than a century.

López is one of five Puerto Rican patriots who remain locked up in U.S. prisons for their activities in support of independence. The others are Juan Segarra Palmer, Haydée Beltrán, Carlos Alberto Torres, and Antonio Camacho Negrón.

In 1999 a new growth in opposition to the impact of Washington's colonial rule—seen in the increasing support for the campaign in defense of the political prisoners, as well as in the explosion of the fight to get the U.S. Navy off the Puerto Rican island of Vieques—led to the decision by the administration of President William Clinton to release 11 of the 17 political prisoners being held at that time.

Six were not included in Clinton's commutation. Juan Segarra and Oscar López were told they needed to serve additional time before being considered for a pardon. Segarra, who has already served more than 20 years in prison, will be released in January 2004.

The other four, Carlos Alberto Torres, Antonio Camacho, José Solís, and Haydée Beltrán were not included in the amnesty offer. Solís was released in November 2002.

The web site for the New York–based ProLibertad Freedom Campaign says that according to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons Camacho is scheduled to be released in August 2004.

After being released in 2002, Camacho was rearrested in April 2003 for refusing to accept conditions preventing him from continuing to speak out against colonial rule.

Carlos Alberto Torres is demanding that he be allowed to receive family visits. Torres' mother, Alejandrina Torres, who was one of 11 prisoners released under Clinton's order, having served 16 years in prison, has been repeatedly denied her request to visit her stepson at the federal prison in Oxford, Wisconsin.

The Committee for Human Rights of Puerto Rico, the National Boricua Human Rights Network, and ProLibertad are urging supporters of democratic rights to send letters of protest on behalf of Oscar López Rivera and Carlos Alberto Torres. Letters should be sent to Harley G. Lappin, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 320 First Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20534; fax (202) 514-6878.

Tonga protesters defend freedom of the press

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—More than 6,000 people marched on Tonga's parliament October 6 to protest moves by the country's king to increase the power of the monarchy and limit freedom of the press.

Alexis Huni, a retired Tongan worker living in Auckland, told the *Militant* that protests were held in all four main groups of islands that make up the Pacific Island nation of 104,000 people. "If the people are marching, it shows the law is not for the good of the people," he said. "It's to restrict the freedom for people to say what they want to say and write down what they want to."

The constitutional changes proposed by King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV and adopted by the royalist parliament limit the powers of the judiciary to review royal decisions. He sought the restrictions after the High Court twice this year overturned government bans on *Taimi'o Tonga*, a newspaper that has regularly criticized government actions. Parliament approved the changes October 16 by a vote of 16-11.

The king already rules Tonga with near-absolute power. Only nine of the country's 30 members of parliament are popularly elected. Of the nine, all eight who were present at the October 16 vote opposed the restrictions.

The king and the holders of the country's 33 noble titles choose the other 21 members among themselves. The king appoints the 12 cabinet ministers, all nobles for life, and can dissolve parliament at will.

Writing in the October 22 *New Zealand Herald*, columnist Tapu Misa called the October 6 march "a rare move of defiance," and commented, "Unlike the only other march back in 1991, when 1,500 Tongans protested against constitutional changes to cover the illegal selling of Tongan citizenship to non-Tongans, this one wasn't as subdued or polite. This time there was chanting, shouting, and banners: 'Clive Edwards, Minister of Police. We're not afraid of you.'"

Kalafi Moala, *Taimi'o Tonga*'s New Zealand–based publisher, told the October 7 *Herald* that the march and other actions signaled the people's growing anger and the gathering strength of the pro-democracy movement in Tonga. "People are feeling that their freedom is going to be infringed on, not just the media, but their freedom to speak. There was a lot of passion from people at the march."

Like most Pacific Island nations, Tonga is kept underdeveloped by the world imperialist system. A former British protectorate, Tonga became independent in 1970. Squash, coconuts, bananas, and vanilla beans make up two-thirds of total exports. They are produced on land leased from the nobles by small farmers, or by an increasing number of larger enterprises that employ up to 100 wage workers.

Sixty-five percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, yet the country must import a high proportion of its food, mainly from New Zealand. By far the biggest contribution to the national income is remittances from Tongans who have traveled overseas in search of work, chiefly to New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.

The imperialist rulers of New Zealand and Australia have long regarded Tonga and the other islands of the Pacific as within their special sphere of influence. Tonga's dependence on these exploiting powers is perpetuated through "aid," which amounts to a quarter of the government's annual budget. In June of this year the New Zealand government released a report by Bryan Smythe, its former high commissioner in Tonga, which raised concerns about growing instability in the island kingdom. The report also noted that "the growing influence of China in the islands to our north may at some stage make us feel uncomfortable."

Colombian regime is set back in referendum

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The right-wing president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, suffered a setback in an October 25 ballot initiative centered on cutbacks in wages and pensions, for which he had campaigned heavily. The next day, Luis Eduardo Garzón, a former Communist Party leader and officer of the oil workers union, won the election for mayor of Bogotá, the country's capital, defeating the government-backed candidate.

The centerpiece of the 15-point referendum was a proposal to impose a two-year wage and pension freeze on government employees. Uribe campaigned for a yes vote on the measure to fulfill commitments to the International Monetary Fund in return for $2.1 billion IMF loan his government received earlier this year. He claimed that passage of his "reforms" would ward off a financial collapse like the one in Argentina two years ago.

Uribe was elected in May 2002 with a large majority, and according to recent opinion polls his approval rating is 75 percent. Nevertheless Uribe was unable to convince one-quarter of registered voters to participate in the referendum. A 25 percent turnout was required, along with a majority of those casting ballots, for the referendum to pass. Initial election results indicate that barely two or three of the 15 proposals in the referendum may pass.

Uribe also linked the referendum to his regime's war against anti-government guerrilla groups, the largest of which is the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). He called for "a vote against terrorism," stating he would use funds from the wage and pension freeze to up military spending.

In a high-profile visit to Colombia and Honduras in August, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld praised Uribe for doing an "excellent job" in his fight against "narcoterrorism," and announced that Washington was considering offering Bogotá more weapons and training as part of Plan Colombia. Launched in 2000 by the Clinton administration, Plan Colombia has provided $2.5 billion in military aid, making Bogotá the third-largest recipient of U.S. military funding after Tel Aviv and Cairo.

In step with Washington's campaign against Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, Colombian military officials have charged that the government in Caracas is allowing guerilla groups to use Venezuelan territory as a refuge and supply route, increasing the potential for armed border conflicts between Colombian and Venezuelan forces.

Garzón won 47 percent of vote in the October 26 Bogotá mayoral race, defeating the Uribe-backed candidate by 7 percent. His electoral bloc, Independent Democratic Pole, promised to provide jobs and criticized Uribe's "security" policies. Over the past year the government has conducted mass arrests of union leaders and human rights activists, accusing them of having ties to the guerrillas.

Having lost in the referendum, Uribe announced tax increases, spending cuts, and other measures October 29 to meet IMF demands. Carlos Rodríguez, head of the United Workers Federation (CUT), responded, "We reject the government's Plan B as an attempt to use legislative means to put into effect the referendum, which the people have rejected."

Further Reading from Pathfinder

Puerto Rico: Independence is a necessity
By Rafael Cancel Miranda
In two interviews, Cancel Miranda—one of five Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979—speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. Also available in Spanish. $3.00

Order online: www.pathfinderpress.com, also available at bookstores listed on Page 8